THE SAINTS ADVANTAGE:

OR

THE VVELL-FARE OF THE FAITHFVLL, IN THE WORST TIMES.

A Sermon,

Preached at the *Hage* the 18. of *May*,

Before the moſt High, and Mighty Princeſſe,

ELIZABETH, by the Grace of GOD,

Queene of Bohemia, *Counteſſe Palatine of the Rhene, Dutches of* Bavaria, *&c.*

And onely Daughter to our Soveraigne Lord King IAMES.

By IOHN WING, an vnworthy Miniſter of the Goſpell, and Paſtour to the Engliſh Church at *Fluſhing* in ZEALAND.

2 Cor. 1. 3. 4.

3. *Bleſſed be God the Father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies, and God of all conſolation.*

4. *Who comforteth vs in our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our ſelues are comforted of God.*

LONDON,

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TO THE MOST, HIGH, AND MIGHTIE PRINCESSE,

ELIZABETH, by the grace of GOD, *Countesse Palatine of the Rhene, &c.*

IOHN WING, Pastour of the *English* Church at *Flushing* in *Zealand*, wisheth all encrease of grace, and peace, *and whatsoever may enlarge all present happines on earth, and assure that which is eternall in heaven.*

MOST GRACIOVS PRINCESSE,

INasmuch as it pleased your most excellent *Maiestie*, to vouchsafe a *Gracious eare* to the weake vtterance of these Meditations, I am comfortably encouraged to present a more compleate discovery of them, to your *Princely eyes*, not that I account them worthy (as they are mine) of the *least looke of Maiestie*; but trusting wholy to that clemency and favour, which I humbly entreat, may shine from you, vpon this my poore endevours; it having (next to the honour of the most high God) her one-

ly reſpect, and ayme, at your *Maieſties* preſent, and future condition; a true *type* whereof, is here tendered by him, whoſe ſoule doth daily ſue vnto the *King of Kings*, that as he hath meaſured vnto, (and you haue ſhared with,) *Moſes*, and *David*, many tribulations in the entrance of their honour, and renowne, and after made them ſo much the more *famous*, *admired*, and *victorious*: So it, might pleaſe the ſame Lord to alot you the ſweete happineſſe of *their* iſſue, which was moſt bleſſed and glorious; to alay the diſtaſte of that bitter beginning, which (vnto nature) ſeemeth ſomewhat tarte, and grievous; and together with that peereleſſe greatneſſe which they enioyed on earth; the ſame glory and joy, which they poſſeſſe in heaven. The *Great GOD* of heaven and earth bleſſe, with the richeſt *abundance*, and *combination* of his *rareſt*, and *beſt* bleſſings, your *Royall Head*, *and Huſband*; your *Highneſſe*, all your hopefull *Plants*, and *Princely poſteritie*, that your *Crowne* may yet flouriſh, your enemies may ever periſh, and you all may be made *mirrours* of *Maieſti*, and *Royaltie*, to all Generations.

Your MAIESTIES *in all*
dutie to be commanded,

IOHN WING.

TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFVLL,
And moſt worthy Gentlemen,
Sir *Francis Barrington*, Sir *Thomas Barrington*, and Sir *William Maſſam*,
Knights, and to their vertuous
LADIES.

IOHN WING, Wiſheth all continuance, and encreaſe of *temporall* happineſſe on earth, which *may aſſure, and further, that which is* eternall *in the Heavens.*

Right Worſhipfull, and Right well-beloved,

IT *is now ſome good ſpace of time ſince God gaue me the happines, and opportunitie, to be made knowne vnto you, and from time to come, to taſte, and receiue thoſe fruits of your fauour and loue; which howſoever, I leaue to the Lord (out of his loue) for a full recompence of reward, to be given vnto every of you, in due time; yet, I could not but out of my dutie ſo acknow-*

ledge the same, as I might both make knowne your worthy examples for others to imitate, and trace, in these dead and vnworthy times; and also giue evidence to your selues, of my true and vnfayned thankfulnes, so deepely engraven, as no distance of place, *or* durance of time, (*I hope*) *shall ever be able to abolish. Receiue I beseech you* all, *this* myte, *as the modell of my hearts desire towards you, and of your estate with* that God, *who having enriched you with that glorious* Advantage, *and* Prerogatiue, *to be called his* Saints, *will so over-rule all evills, incident to* his, *that their very* damages, *shall become matter of*
1 Tim. 6. 6. *gaine and advantage. He who hath sayd* [Godlinesse is gaine, [*and shewed the powerfull perswasion thereof,*
Phil. 3. 7. 8. *in their practise, who haue* [accounted the things that were gaine vnto them, losse and dung for Christ,] *make you in Christ, happy gainers, by your grace, and godlinesse, with the* happiest *of his owne, vnder heaven, for the present, during your pilgrimage here; and in heaven, in full possession for ever, and ever. To his grace I commend you* all, *and all that are yours; daily desiring you may be partakers of his glory through him, who was*
Rev. 1. 18. *dead, and is aliue, and beholde he liueth for evermore, in whom I rest ever*

Yours to my vtmost,
for any service.

IOHN WING.

To the Christian Reader.

BEloved in the Lord, seeing promise is debt, and performance alone the onely discharge that can giue plenary satisfaction; I must (at present) deale as poore debtors oft-times are enforced, to pray where they cannot pay, and to entreat yet longer time, for that which was due long a-goe. It is neere foure yeares, since I began to engage my selfe vnto thee, for the perfecting of my Matrimoniall Treatise, then (in part) published. To this day, I confesse I haue not finished the same, for I met with such cumbrance, hinderance, and inconvenience, in that little, which was but as a Preface to the rest, that I durst not aduenture to set vpon the remainder, being the farre greater part. Yet, I am not out of all hope, ere long to doe it; and in the meane time, I thought good to send this Sermon abroad, wherein I haue endeuoured the cure, of one of the most common sores, that hath come to my obseruation in these euill times; to wit, the hard conceit, that not onely the vngodly doe harbour of Gods people, but they of themselues, especially if outward things goe hard with them, and the times doe not fauour, but distaste, and frowne vpon them. Beholde here, a man that was taught of God, to know so much of the very meanest estate of the members of Christ, that he willingly left to be mightie in the world, to make one among them in their meanenesse, and misery; and by his practise made it manifest, that his perswasion was quite contrary to the base opinion of men, touching the Saints of God. And if he were led vnto this excellent estima-

tion

tion by extraordinary inſpiration *from God, is it not* extraordinary impietie, *to thinke or ſpeake otherwiſe of them? Surely, ſo farre as* God *did informe the one,* Satan *doth infatuate the other. Reade and ponder the particulars, and pray to* that God *for me, to whom I am, and ſhall be a ſuiter for thee, for thy preſent, and future well-fare.*

Farewell in the Lord,
in whom I am thine,

IOHN WING.

THE SAINTS ADVANTAGE:

OR

The well-fare of the Faithfull, in the Worſt Times.

HEBR. II. 26.

Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Ægypt.

IT is not much materiall vnto vs, neither will it be worth our time and labour, to looke after the *Writer* of this *Epiſtle*, ſeeing it is paſt queſtion, that the *holy Ghoſt* was the *Author* of the ſame. And therfore we will not trouble our ſelues, or you, with any needleſſe and fruitleſſe ſearch, what man of *God* it might be that penned it, ſeeing we are throughly perſwaded that God himſelfe inſpired it; who having great abundance and varietie of divine *Secretaryes*, might employ whom he pleaſed

in this ſervice, and yet not be pleaſed to tell vs who it was, whom he did employ in the ſame. It is not the leſs *canonicall*, or *auth ntike*, becauſe we cannot tell who wrote it: the matter of it is known to be *good*, though no *name* of any man of God, be prefixed there-vnto. The which, ſince the Lord in great wiſedome hath concealed, how can we without groſſe folly endeavour to diſcover it? he having thought *good* to hide it, it muſt be thought *evill* in vs to make enquirie after it.

What; cannot a good meſſage of glad tydings be welcome from our beſt friend, vnleſſe wee may know the meſſengers name that brought it? Or ſhall not a *Patent* (from the *King*) contayning matter of *profit*, or *preferment*; or a *Pardon* of ſome foule fact, bee accepted and beleeved, if withall we may not be certified (by name) which of the *Secretaries of State* did write it? would not all the world cenſure it for vnreaſonable abſurdity, abſurd incivility, yea, and for moſt vncivill, and inſufferable inſolency, if a man ſhould ſtand vpon theſe tearmes with his *betters*, and thus refuſe the meanes of his welfare? were not ſuch a one well *worthy* to bee wofull, for want of that which he ſo *vnworthily* refuſed? And if thus it be, in theſe temporall occurrents, which can concerne but our preſent externall advantage, it muſt of neceſſity bee ſo much the more evill, and intollerable, in theſe ſpirituall affayres, by how much in them, we haue to do with him, whoſe excellency and glory doth ſurmount all mens; and in thoſe paſſages, which both in their owne nature, and in their conſequence to vs, doe infinitely and incomparably exceede, all the benefits of this preſent life, as being concerning the eternall, and inconceivable happines of our whole man for ever and ever in the heavens.

Had any important point of holy information depended

ded vpon the notice of the *Pen-man* of this part of ſcripture, we ſhould aſſuredly haue knowne who he had bin, for we haue great reaſon to beleeue that our good God would not haue withholden any good thing from vs: we may therefore wel conclude that no thing could be gotten by it, ſeeing the *moſt wiſe God* will not let vs know it; and what idle and ſenſeleſſe *baſi-boaies* are wee then, to make our ſelues ſuch worthles & vnprofitable worke, as will not pay for the time which is ſpent about it, nor yeelde any advantage, if it were finiſhed, and the *Writer* revealed.

The more are men to be blamed, (*Diuines* eſpecially, and the *beſt* moſt of all), who make ſo much a doe about this particular, as if the *authoritie*, or *nullitie* of this *Epiſtle* lay vpon the *Writer*, rather then vpon the *Author* of the ſame. It would weary and tyre any man, and make him to mourne in his very ſoule, to ſee how men of eminent excellency, and worthy parts, haue toyled in this *titular*, (I had almoſt ſayd, *triviall*) buſineſſe, diſputed betweene *Papiſt* and *Papiſt*, betweene *Proteſtant* and *Papiſt*, yea, betweene *Proteſtant* and *Proteſtant*, as if it were a matter of more then words or names (as *Gallio* ſayd) and of ſome mighty conſequence, when as indeede it is not, neither hath any inference of any force or fruit annexed vnto it, whoſe name ſoever it beare.

Some will haue it to bee *Pauls*, and for prooffe they pleade: firſt, The ſtile, and ſtraine of it to be ſo like *his*, euery where, that it muſt needs be *his owne* here: ſecondly, The cloſe, or concluſion of this Epiſtle *cap.* 13. 25. being the ſame which *Paul* ſaith he ſaluted his friends, and ſhut vp all his *Epiſtles* withall: Thirdly, The authority of the Apoſtle *Peter* writing (as is thought) to the Hebrewes ſaying, 2 *Pet.* 3. 15. 16. that *Paul* had written to

them, and seemeth to point at this Epistle, because of the obscurity and difficulty of divers things therein: and together with these, divers other obseruable things are instanced, and vrged in the body of the Epistle, (too long for vs now to relate) which make much probabilitie that *Paul* wrote it.

Some others againe will not haue it to be *Pauls*, but are perswaded some other holy man of God had the penning of it, and they plead: 1. That his name is not to it, whereas *Pauls* manner was to set his name to all that are vndoubtedly his: 2. That he, who wrote this *Epistle* seemeth not to haue had the matter therof *immediately* from God (which *Paul* euermore had) but *mediately* from some other, who heard it from *Christ*, as the words *cap.* 2. 1. 2. 3. doe import: together with some other likely passages which doe improoue *Pauls* penning of it.

And this *vnnessary controuersie* hath cost much time, & paines, euen among men of *great* learning and godlines, who yet I am perswaded, cannot but know, that neither the *Inscriptions*, nor *Subscriptions* of these *Epistles* which haue beene written by seuerall *Apostles*, are, or can in any good reason be accounted *scripture*, considering how many iust exceptiõs may be alledged against sundry of both sorts, to make them mistrusted, and subject to vndeniable ambiguity, whereas all *Scripture* is absolutely infallible.

Esa. 55. 2. How is it then that men lay out their money for that which is not bread? and take such paines for things that cannot profit? Summe vp all the *Items* vrged of either side, what will the *Totall* amount vnto, but this, that inasmuch as some probability lyeth on either part, there is assurance on neither. Againe, admit and suppose it were sure on one side, either the *affirmatiue*, that it were *Pauls*, what are we the better, or the wiser in the way to heaven for the certaintie hereof? or on the *negatiue* that

it

it was none of *Pauls*, but that *Luke* (as ſome thinke) or *Barnabas*, or *Clement* (as others conceiue) did pen it, what holines or happines is wonne, when all this is done? ſurely none. The *moſt* that can come of the former is onely this, that we may call it [*the Epiſtle of Paul to the Hebrewes*] and put his name into our Coppies, as it is in all others except one (as one obſerveth). The *leaſt* that can come of the latter, is, that we leaue out *Pauls* name, and all names, and call it as we finde it [*the Epiſtle to the Hebrewes*] which title or inſcription, being indifferent to either ſide, we will reſt in the ſame as it is, without further contention or inquiſition, ſeeing either *Pauls*, or any other name noted before, may be *probably put in*, and yet *ſafely left out*, let vs take it without any at all, and ſo proceed from the *writer*, to the *matter* contained in that which is written, eſpecially in that little parcell which hath beene read, and in the reuealing whereof, we intend (by *Gods* grace) to inſiſt at this time.

And that we may the better come to comprehend what the will and mind of the Lord is therein, it ſhall be good to goe backe a little, to looke vpon the generall ſtate of the whole Chapter, and to take ſuch a view of the ſame, as may further vs in the particular of theſe words.

And what is this Chapter (being well conſidered) but a kinde of *Summary* or *Abridgement*, of the olde Teſtament in that part thereof eſpecially, which is *hiſtoricall*, and containeth the diſcouery of things done in matter of fact, by thoſe moſt famous *Worthies* of the Lord, the eminency of whoſe faith, and excellencie of the fruits of the ſame, haue here a moſt glorious remembrance, being left vpō an euerlaſting record that cannot faile, but muſt and ſhall remayne to the *bleſſed memoriall of thoſe iuſt men*, the tryall of whoſe faith having beene more precious than gold, ſhall be found vnto (the Lords, & their owne) prayſe,

Prov.

1 Pet. 1. 7.

prayſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Ieſus Chriſt.

Of which *Worthies* (both men and women) wee haue here a particular *Catalogue*, many of them being (*by name*) perſonally expreſſed, from the beginning of the Chapter to the 33. *verſe*: and others apparantly included (though *not named*) from thence to the end. And in this *Catalogue* it pleaſeth the holy Ghoſt to keepe an excellent *decorum*, in an orderly and methodicall diſtribution of the perſons, according to the times wherein they lived, and the *Chronologie* of the world, in the moſt famous *Periods* of the ſame vnder the olde Teſtament.

It beginneth with righteous *Abell*, verſ. 4. who lived not long after the Creation (being the ſecond from *Adam*) and goeth on from him to *Enoch* the ſeaventh from *Adam* (as *Iude* call's him:) and from *Enoch* to *Noah*, and ſo finiſheth the firſt famous period of the world, from the *Creation*, to the *Flood*; and beginnes the ſecond from the flood to *Abraham*, & the reſt of thoſe peereles *Patriarchs*, who lived after the *Flood*, and before the *Law* till *Moſes*; who over-living them all, did finiſh the ſecond famous period from the *flood* to the giving of the *Law*, and made entrance into the third, from *Moſes* and the *Law* given, to the time of the *Iudges*: and ſo from thence-forward to the change of the civill government of the *Iewes*, from *Iudges* to *Kings*: and vnder their *Kings*, both during the time of their ſetled and peaceable ſtate, and alſo thence, vnto thoſe interrupted and miſerable dayes, wherein Captivitie prevayled; both at the *firſt*, *in part*, to their diſturbance once, and againe for a time; and *at the laſt* to the *totall* and finall downe-fall and over-throw of that Nation, as touching any viſible face, either of *civill*, or an *eccleſiaſticall* eſtate.

Verſ. 14.

Now

Now in this *Campe Royall*, of such as are here numbred, named, and made glorious by the notable fruits of their faith; some haue renowned themselues (as seruants) *actiuely* by doing, others haue beene approoued (as souldiers) *passiuely* by suffering; but *Moses* (being the *man* in our *Text*) is truely interessed into either condition, and hath made *double* declaration of his faith, in both kindes of those things that are reported of him, for wee finde both what he *did*, and what he *endured*, and so much of either, as doth manifest him for one of the rarest mirrours among those many, who are mustered and magnified here, to haue *fought the good fight of faith*; and that, in all those occurrents that came to passe (on his part) either before *Israel* went out of *Egypt*, or after; for within one of these two computations of time, all is comprehended which is recorded of him, and for which he is here applauded by the holy Ghost.

The powerfull worke of faith appearing in him before the *Israelites* departure from vnder *Pharaoh*, had a *two-folde* operation.

1. While he was yet a *Courtier*, (and great in Court too) being for so long time the adopted, and reputed sonne of *Pharaohs* daughter, in which time faith wrought in his heart a *gracious resolution*, to giue ouer that *glorious condition*.

2. When he put this resolution into practise, casting off the *Court*, and forsaking *Egypt* for a season, and afterwards returning by warrant from God, (and as the Lords Ambassadour) to worke out the peoples freedome: and these passages are particulated vnto vs, in the 24. 25. 26. and 27 Verses.

The further efficacie wherein his faith shined, after he had left *Egypt* altogether, and was gone thence with

with Gods people, is evident in ſuch relation as is made thereof, *ver.* 28. 29.

Our Text is a part of the former power of his faith, while he was yet in *Egypt*, wherein, (& that while he was yet a great *Peere*, among theſe *Pagans*) the Lord mightily, and *extraordinarily*, wrought in him immediately by himſelfe, without all ordinary meanes (that man can imagine) this *great* grace of *Faith*, which by a holy kinde of heavenly and divine *violence*, enforced him to theſe 3. Things which lye in theſe 3. Verſes.

1. To relinquiſh and renounce his whole eſtate, with all the honours, and advantages annexed therevnto, all which, although he had long enioyed them, and they were many and great, at preſent, and might (poſſibly) haue beene much greater afterward, through the hope of his further riſing by meanes of the favour of *Pharaohs daughter*, yet faith makes nothing of theſe mightie things, but he freely forſaketh all, and willingly refuſeth to be called or accounted *her Sonne*, verſ. 24.

2. To chuſe (in ſtead of this reiected honour & royaltie) the miſerable and moſt afflicted ſtate of the people of God, who were in the greateſt ſlavery, and vnder the moſt grievous tyranny that could be, *verſ.* 25.

3. To iudge and cenſure (and that with a righteous iudgement) both his former practiſes of *refuſing* and *chuſing*, to be lawfull, and good, & well pleaſing to the Lord, *verſ.* 26.

Faith wrought extraordinarily.

And this *third* is the onely thing, where-with we haue to doe, yet before we enter vpon it in *particular*, we haue one obſervable thing to note in the *generall*, to wit, That thoſe graces which are immediately, and extraordinarily wrought in man by the Lord, doe carry mans heart extraordinarily towards the Lord. If God worke faith extraordinarily in *Abraham*, he will leaue his Countrey; he will

will ſacrifice his ſon, *doe* any thing, *deny* nothing, at Gods command. If in *Moſes* he will leaue all the honour, & riches, and happines in the world, and expoſe himſelfe to any miſery, danger, and infamy for the honour of God. The ſame might be ſayd of *Ioſeph*, of *Eſter*, and many other, whoſe graces haue yeelded rare and wonderfull *fruit*, becauſe they ſprung from more then an ordinarie *roote*. The more immediate any mans graces are from God, the more admirable are the manifeſtatiõs of thoſe graces before God.

But we intend not to ſtay here: let vs therefore ſet forward to this *third* effect of *Moſes* faith in the wordes of the 26. *verſe* (contayning the eſtimation of his ſayd acts) and in them, we haue to conſider 3. things. The parts of the text.

1. The guide and ground of this his eſtimation, to wit, *Faith*, not common ſence, nor carnall reaſon, for neither of theſe would haue endured any ſuch proceedings. 1.

2. The things eſteemed, to wit, the *reproach of Chriſt*, and the *riches of Egypt*, and theſe being ballanced by *faith*, and layd one, againſt the other, the former is found to be much better, and farre beyond the latter. 2.

3. The reaſon of this his opinion, which ariſeth not from any reſpect of things *preſent* and *ſenſible*, but onely and wholy from the happy apprehenſion, and aſſurance, that he had of that *inviſible*, and *infinite* recompence of rewarde layd vp for thoſe who can forgoe all things for Gods glory. 3.

And theſe are the parts of this verſe; touching which, we ſhall not neede to make any ſtay vpon the interpretation of any of them, there being no obſcuritie, or ambiguitie, but all being eaſie and open to the meaneſt capacity: we will therefore haſten to the matter of inſtruction which they doe adminiſter vnto vs.

A speciall property of Faith.

And heere, in the very first word [*Esteeming*] (inasmuch as his faith made him thus to *esteeme*) wee might note vnto you, one excellent propertie, and power of true faith, which is, to alter the mind, opinion, and iudgement of man from that it was, touching the world, and all things therein; to esteeme the best things therein so base, as to preferre and chuse the baseſt estate in the world, before that which in the eye of the world is the best. Time was, that *Moses* could make vse of, and possesse the honours of *Egypt*, for forty yeares together, but now (vnto faith) affliction is better then promotion, slavery then honour, he will rather be a captiue with Gods people, then a gallant *Courtier*, euen the son of a Kings daughter: he is now otherwise conceited, opinionated, and perswaded then before he was; *Faith* hath so altered the case with him, that he is nothing so minded as he was

It is no marvell that the holy Ghost oppoſeth *faith*, and *sence*, and that the Apostle sayth [*we walke* by faith, *and not by sight* for they looked not on things that were seene, but lived by faith, which fed it selfe, and fastened them, on things not seene, and so they accounted and iudged all things base and vile, yea *losse* and *dung*, (yea as most loathsome and excecrable excrements, as the word signifies:) and could well brooke to haue themselues accounted the base offscouring of all things, thorow the excellency of faith that was in them.

Phil. 3. 8.

Let no man vainely boast of this vertue, or imagine he hath himselfe possest of this singular grace, to whose mind, iudgement, and estimation, all things are not so base and abhominable, that he can (being put to it by God) most willingly abandon, and abhorre all riches and glory; and freely take vp all affliction, wretchednes and misery; yea, and rather (as our *Moses* heere) make a good choyse of the *worst*, then make an ill vse of the

best,

beſt, that the world can afford. True *faith* (wherever it is) is of a noble, heroicall, heavenly, and divine diſpoſition, and carries the heart of man into *high contempt* of the things which before he had in *higheſt eſteeme*, ſcorning in the leaſt, to ſtoope to the greateſt and moſt glorious lure, that can be offred of the things that are below, and doth diſdain to looke after thoſe advantages which are moſt deare vnto others.

But wee muſt not dwell here neither, neither is it our preſent purpoſe to proſecute this point, but to ſet forward vnto that whereon we intend (*by Gods grace*) to inſiſt: and that is taken from the *ſecond* conſideration; which is of the things eſteemed, and they (being compared one with another) the [*reproach of Chriſt*] is found farre to exceede, and to bee much better, then the *treaſures in Egypt*.] From whence the maine thing which we haue to learne for our inſtruction is thus much.

That the worſt eſtate *of a childe of God, is better, then the* beſt eſtate *of any wicked man.* *Doctrine*

Note it well; wee ſay and avouch, that the worſt eſtate of Gods childe, is better then the beſt of a wicked man.

For the better vnderſtanding and beleeving of which point, becauſe at *firſt ſight*, it may ſeeme a ſtrange *Paradoxe*, and a propoſition impoſſible to be true; it ſhall be neceſſary before we come to proue the ſame, to explane it before you, and to giue all men to vnderſtand, what wee meane by the *worſt eſtate* of Gods childe, and by the *beſt eſtate* of a wicked man.

And (in a word) *thus* we meane: that, looke what the world (that is, the men of the world) doe eſteeme and iudge (on the one part) to be the meaneſt and moſt miſerable ſtate of any good man: and alſo what they themſelues doe againe conceiue (on the other part) to bee

their owne moſt happy and comfortable condition, that (on either part) we intend in this our inſtruction.

Now all men doe know, that the world doth repute affliction, diſgrace, tyranny, perſecution, and all kinde of cruelty, and ſlavery, to be the vnhappieſt caſe a man can poſſibly be in: and on the other ſide, the honour, wealth, proſperity and abundance of all things which the heart of man can wiſh, when every thing goes with him as he would haue it, and all things ſettle vpon him to his ſoules content: this is adjudged the happieſt ſtate of him, or them that haue it. And this is that we account the beſt of the one, and the worſt of the other, even that, which themſelues doe account ſo, we aske no other interpreters of our meaning, then the men of the earth, in their ordinarie and vniverſall opinion.

And of theſe eſtates being thus vnderſtood, we are to proue, and make good, that the former (*being the worſt*) is better to a childe of God, then the latter (*being the beſt*) can be, to an vngodly man: yea, that the very gall and worme-wood, and the moſt *bitter* & envenomed things which the world can giue the godly to drinke; are happier, and more holſome to digeſt, then the *ſweeteſt* portion of their cup, who are vngodly, when it is filled vp to the brym, and running over with all the rareſt, and moſt pleaſant compoſitions which the world can powre into it, of all manner of delicacies and delights that are to be deſired, either for pleaſure, or for profit, or for honour, or for eaſe, or for ought elſe, which may take vp & bewitch the mind, of a worldly man. And thus our meaning being explained, the matter remaineth now to be proved.

The full confirmation whereof, will ſo one ariſe out of the due conſideration of our text, and the true contents of the ſame, in caſe we take ſuch true notice of them as we ought.

Were

Were there no other man but *Moſes*, no other evidence or example to make good the point but *he alone*, in that which he hath here done; he onely were able to avouch the truth we teach againſt all *gainſayers* whatſoever; inaſmuch as we finde his practice to be of worthy approbation with God, and alſo worthy to be a moſt worthy preſident vnto vs from God, and that it is recorded, not onely for *his commendation*, but for *our imitation* alſo: in which act of his, let vs note theſe particular and ſingular paſſages, which may leade vs the more to beleeue the truth we are to confirme.

Firſt, how he was brought into the favour of *Pharaoh*, to wit, by a ſtrange & extraordinary providence of God, diſpoſing his Parēts there to hide him, where the daughter of *Pharaoh* muſt diſcover him, and in diſpoſing her heart (having found him) to commiſerate the miſerable and helples condition of this forlorne and deſolate infant, whom his owne father and mother durſt not owne, or acknowledge, but being the *Kings decree* enforced to caſt him out, the Kings daughter is directed by the Lord to pittie him for the preſent, and to provide to haue him nurſed and nurtered, as her owne ſonne, by adoption, for time to come. 1.

Secondly, being thus adopted by her, and nurſed, (by his owne mother as the almightie did order and manage it) ſhe tooke further care and order for his education, ſo as he might be made meete for honour and advancement in her fathers houſe and ſervice; whereas ſhe might haue brought him vp, in ſome baſe and ſervile manner, according to the quality of a *Captiues* childe, yea, and the Lord filled him with vnderſtanding and capacitie to become furniſhed in *all the learning of the Egyptians*. Act. 7. 22. 2.

Thirdly, being thus qualified, he came to eminency and grew great in Court; *Pharaoh* not refuſing to preferre 3.

him, though he could not but (in all likelihood) know him to be an *Ebrew* childe; and his preferment ſeemes to be to ſome great office of worth, and revenew, and that brought him in abundance of wealth; why elſe, are the treaſures of Egypt (on *Moſes* part) oppoſed to the reproach of Chriſt? It may be he was *Lord-Treaſurer of Egypt*. (Who can tell the contrary?)

4. *Fourthly*, being thus inveſted into honour, and wealth, he continued therein for no ſmall time, but full *fortie* Acts 7. 48. *yeares*, which length of time did ſo ſeaſon him in the ſweetneſſe of what he had, as might (in all reaſon) make him moſt loth, and vnwilling to leaue the ſame.

5. *Fiftly*, having thus long enioyed all this favour, he was free to holde it ſtill if he would, no man doth baſely vndermine him by ſuborning *Pharaoh* againſt him, or by detection of him to haue beene a baſe *Ebrew bratt* from the beginning, and ſo to enrage the *King* againſt him for that he had crept in thus farre, and kept in thus long; neither is any thing attempted by any man, which might make *Moſes* to be diſcontent with his preſent ſtate, and ſo reſolue in a humor to leaue it, but he might hold what he had at his pleaſure, even for perpetuitie.

6. *Sixtly*, adde to all theſe, that if he will be going hence, either *Egypt* will be too hot for him, or if he will tarry therein, and ioyne himſelfe to his owne people, he could not but ſee *Pharaohs* tyranny, and their miſery much encreaſing.

Their burdens heavier,
Their task-maſters fiercer,
Their bondage ſorer.

And his owne among them, (if he will needes make one) to be more extreame and extraordinary than all the reſt, becauſe he left ſo much honour, and eaſe, & wealth, willingly to come to calamitie, t'were pitty (would *Pha-*

raoh

rash say) but he should haue enough of it, that was so willing to it, and therefore let him (of all men) be most vexed, pursued and oppressed aboue others, who was so witles that he could not tell, when he was well, and tarry in that happinesse which was so graciously and freely conferd vpon him, and wherein he might haue continued (through the Kings kindnesse and grace) the longest day of his life, and would not.

These *few* (with some others moe, that might be instanced) being layd together on a heape, doe make vp mightie evidence in the eye of carnall reason to condemne *Moses* of manifest folly in forsaking his present state, and following this course wherevnto he betooke himselfe at this time.

But bring them all (and all that can be pleaded to the same purpose) and let *faith* looke vpon them, that which was a *beame* before, is not so much as a *moath* now, nor worthy in any wise to be respected; this one grace melts all these great things into meere *nullities*, and makes nothing of every thing that was before vrged to this end: neither the kindnesse of the *Kings daughter*, nor the favour of *the King her father*, nor all the great things he got by both, nor his long keeping of them, nor his vndoubted danger, and disgrace in leaving them, nor every of these alone, nor all of them together, could do any thing with *Moses*, but he is resolute, (by faith) to forgoe the best estate the earth could yeeld him, that he might partake with the worst, and most woefull condition of Gods people, and to shew it, the holy Ghost doth witnes, that he did willingly *chuse* the one, and *refuse* the other, being not forced (by flesh and blood) to either, that so the power of *faith* might fully and freely expresse it selfe in both, against all apprehensions, and obiections of man whatsoever.

And

And why ſhould he haue done thus, if he had not knowne our *Doctrine* to be a moſt vndeniable truth? And how came he to know ſo much, but by the extraordinary inſtinct of Gods immediate illumination? Who reuealed thus much to him and gaue him both *faith* to beleeue it, and *conſcience* to doe it accordingly, in ſpite of whatſoeuer might be ſuggeſted to the contrary. And why ſhould not we fully aſſent to the truth hereof, ſeeing *God* hath gone before vs in diſcouering, and this man of *God* in doing, the ſame? Eſpecially ſeeing beſides *Moſes* practice, *Gods* approbation, doth warrant vs; the Lord hath ſet to his hand (as it were) and confirmed, and commended this act of *Moſes* vnto vs, as a fruit of that holineſſe and pietie, which *was* in him, and *ſhould* be in vs, who are commaunded to follow the faith of ſuch, as (by *God*) are well reported of vnto vs, as this man is, who hath a moſt ſauoury name, in the middeſt of this ſacred Catalogue, wherein ſo many Saints of rare note, are recorded vnto vs, and as much (if not more) is ſpoken of his faith, then of many others, and more of this one fruit of the ſame, then of all the reſt.

So that, that which is here written of this man, doth ratifie the matter we haue in hand, his practiſe (thus conſidered as we haue ſaid) is plenary proofe of our point; it had beene apparant vanitie, and gyddineſſe, not any power, or truth of godlineſſe in him, if he had not done by *Gods* direction, who by his ſpirit informed his mind, and conformed his practice, and (by both) confirmed this vndoubted truth vnto vs: otherwiſe, it might haue well beene thought, he was more *brayne-ſicke* then obedient, and beene led from this glory, to that miſery, by *frenzie*, rather than by *faith*. But *faith* made glorious things vile, and vile things glorious vnto him, and ſo he left the *better* ſtate which was (indeed) the *worſe*, and

choſe

choſe the *worſe*, which was (indeed) the *better*, that all men might learne to know the lawfulnes of his carriage herein, and the conſcience of their owne, if in any ſuch like caſe, God call them vnto the like courſe.

Now if beſides this of *Moſes*, we ſhould muſter vp more examples to this end, it were moſt eaſie, (but not very neceſſary) ſo to doe: this Chapter would furniſh vs with a multitude of thoſe that haue (in like manner) done worthily, and beene famous, for this very thing.

What thinke you of *Abraham*, how were his thoughts, how ſtood his heart this way? Was he not well in his owne Countrey? Could a man be better, then to dwell in his owne free land, and to haue ſo great abundance as he had of all good things? Yet he muſt leaue all this *fee-ſimple*, and whatſoever he had vpon it, to goe he knowes not whither, onely this he knowes, that whither ſo ever it is, he hath not a foote of ground, nor any thing at all there, but muſt come from a rich inheritance, and great eſtate, where he might commaund; to ſoiourne and be entertained as a ſtranger vpon curteſie, where he could get foode and lodging for his money. And this he did at Gods command, of his owne accord and vnconſtrayned, as ſoone as he heard he did obey, which he had no reaſon at all to haue done, if faith had not *furniſhed* him with this perſwaſion, and *furthered* him to this practice: had he not knowne the *worſt* place and ſtate God called him *vnto*, to haue beene incomparably better then the *beſt* God called him *from*; he had never ſtirred his foote; but being convinced of this truth, and mooved of God, he went willingly out, as one that knew well, the worſt that he could goe vnto to witneſſe his obedience as a childe of God, would proue more happie to him, then all he could enioy and poſſeſſe vpon other termes.

It were but a fruitleſſe filling vp of time, to adde more examples to a thing ſo evident, and vndeniable as this truth is, we will therefore paſſe from theſe, to the *reaſons* of the Doctrine, to vnderſtand why theſe things are ſo, and how they come to paſſe; and herevnto we haue the more *reaſon*, becauſe this that we teach, ſeemeth to be againſt all *reaſon*, and ſence, that man can commonly conceiue.

I doe freely profeſſe when *firſt* I apprehended it in my heart, it appeared like a ſtrange *Paradoxe* to my ſelfe, a point, incapable of truth, impoſſible to be beleeved; and therefore I doe not wonder that it ſhould be ſo hard of digeſtion to corrupt nature, and carnall reaſon, and that it will not downe with ſo many: *Nature* cannot entertaine it, it is *grace* that muſt firſt rectifie nature, and then certifie it hereof. The Lord never put this opinion into any mans heart, nor vrged the practice of it at his hand, before he had refined his vnderſtanding from the droſſe and dotage, ignorance, and error, wherewith it ſtands defiled by *corrupt* nature: let vs then ſtop the *mouth*, yea, the *breath*, of fleſh and bloud, and open the paſſages of the ſpirit of God, & giue free vent vnto them, and they will ſoone ſhew vs the way (and that by good reaſon too) to be throughly poſſeſſed of this point of truth, and that it is moſt worthy to be credited of vs, and embraced by vs.

And the reaſons inducing vs herevnto, doe ariſe out of the due conſideration, of a *double concluſion*, which we will propound and proue vnto you, that you may carry them in minde evermore, as *golden* and moſt precious remembrances, worthy to be engraven deeply and perpetually, in our hearts, that neither *Satan*, nor the world, might ever raze them out, but that they might remayne with vs all our dayes, even till death. And the *concluſions* are theſe *two*.

Two Concluſions.

1. No-

1. No eſtate can be *evill* to a childe of God, but even his worſt, is *good* for him, yea *beſt* vnto him. 1.

2. No eſtate can be *good* to a wicked man, but even his *beſt* is evill to him, yea *worſt* for him. 2.

The very *worſt* prooues well to a godly man, and *bad* is the *beſt*, to the vngodly. And in the cleare confirmation of theſe two *Concluſions*, the reaſons of our Doctrine will moſt evidently ariſe vnto vs, for it cannot but follow, yea flow moſt naturally in the courſe of all ſound argumentation, that, if the ones *evill* be *good* to him, and the others *good* become *evill* to him, then muſt the meaneſt eſtate of the former, be much more excellent, than the greateſt happines of the latter.

Now either of theſe *Concluſions* reſteth vpon vndeniable proofe and demonſtration.

For the *firſt* thus: That eſtate which commeth vnto a childe of God, accompanied with the infinite loue, wiſedome, goodnes, and power of God, muſt needes be beſt vnto him: But his worſt eſtate commeth thus vpon him: Therefore it muſt needes be beſt to him. Nothing here is ſo much as queſtionable; for ſence ſayes the *firſt* Propoſition is true, that what comes ſo, comes well. And the *Word* of *God* in the evidence thereof, and the *Worke* of *God* in the experience thereof, vpon all his afflicted ones, ſayth the *ſecond* is as true, the *third* (then (muſt iſſue vndoubtedly out of them *both*. 1. Concluſion prooved.

Againe, that eſtate which worketh towardes the furtherance of our *beſt good of all*, muſt needes be beſt for vs; But the worſt, the moſt woefull, and diſtreſſed ſtate of every childe of God doth worke for the *beſt*: therefore it is *beſt* for him. In this argument all is ſound, for no man can doubt of the *firſt* Propoſition, and the Apoſtle puts the *ſecond* out of doubt, where he ſayth [*All things*, (and there he comprehends the worſt things the world can

Rom. 8. 28. yeeld) *worke together for the best*:] the *Conclusion* then comes in of it selfe. And so the *first* ground is cleare.

2. Conclusion prooved. For the *second* thus. That estate which doth so harden mans heart, that he becommeth thereby least capable of *mercie*, and most lyable to *iustice*, (and so furthereth his vtmost confusion, and eternall over-throw) must of necessitie be the *worst* for a man that may be: But a wicked mans *best* estate doth thus: Therefore even his *best* estate is miserable to him. No man can with any colour question the *first* Proposition; and God giues vs sound

Prov. 1. 32. confirmation of the *second*, where he sayth (*ease slayeth the foolish, and the prosperitie of fooles destroyeth them*:) here, by the (*foole*) we must vnderstand the vngodly man, and by (*prosperitie*) all that which he iudgeth most happie to himselfe in this life. Now if nothing bring a wicked man sooner to destruction than that which he most affecteth, and desireth, surely, the same is *worst* of all for him.

Againe, that must needs be a mans worst estate, which is *most accursed* of God to a man: But a wicked mans *best* estate is *most accursed* of God vnto him: Therefore his *best* estate cannot be but *worst* vnto him. The *first* Proposition is easie, and evident (of it selfe) to be beleeved: The *second* is avouched by *Moses*, where he curseth

Deut. 28. 17. 18. in the name of the Lord [*all the encrease, and store, and fruit of a wicked man, whether of his body, or beast, or ground.*] Now if his encrease be accursed, then the more he hath, the more accursed he is, and as either himselfe, or any thing he hath aboundeth, so doth the curse of God abound with it; if he grow from *hundreths* to *thousands*, so also doe his curses multiply from the Lord, who hath

Mal. 2. 2. *cursed the blessings* of every vngodly person. And it is to

Note. be marked, (*as a most remarkable curse*) that he is not cursed in the want of fruit, or barrennesse of his bodie, beasts,

beasts, or ground, for that would every common man account a curse indeede, but, he is accurſed in the poſſeſſion, and proſperitie, and growth of theſe things; and this is a more *wofull*, by how much it is a more *wonderfull* curſe, that a man ſhould haue ſo much, and be ſo much the more vnhappie by having it. So then, if thus it be, then is a wicked mans *beſt* eſtate *worſt* for him, becauſe it is moſt accurſed to him.

And thus theſe *two Concluſions* ſtand vpon cleare and vnqueſtionable grounds, and are impregnable truthes, and being ſo, our mayne *Doctrine* muſt needes iſſue from them both, as naturally as water from a fountaine; and that thus.

If no eſtate can be evill vnto a *good man* but even his *worſt* is good vnto him; and (on the contrary) if no eſtate can be good to a *wicked man*, but even his *beſt* is evill to him; why then, it muſt needes come to paſſe, that the *worſt* eſtate of Gods childe is *better* then the *beſt* of any wicked man: But both theſe haue beene abundantly prooved and therefore the truth we teach, is fully confirmed; for can any man ſo much as once doubt at all, whether the meaneſt *good* eſtate be to be preferred to the greateſt that is *evill*? or demurre whether he ſhould chuſe of the *two*, (if he were put to it) *a poore* and perplexed condition, which may helpe him to heaven, or a proſperous and *opulent* eſtate, which would haſten him to hell? Certainly this queſtion would ſoone be aſſoyled, if it were put to any man (had he but common ſence) to be determined, for even naturall reaſon would giue quicke reſolution, that the *worſt* of that whereby a man might be happy, were to be choſen and preferred, before the beſt of that which will procure a mans miſery.

Why then, the *worſt* of the one being *ſo good*, and the *beſt* of the other *ſo bad*, we cannot but yeeld to our *Doc-*

trine, being ouercome by vndeniable euidence, both of example, in him that hath tryed both estates by his owne experience; and of reason, approouing that which he (vpon tryall) had practised, in refusing the *best* of the one, to choose the *worst* of the other. So that if we will beleeue either *Moses* (who is the man that hath done it) to euidence the truth of his faith, or *God*, who hath magnified *Moses* in that which he hath done, to be truely faithfull, our mindes must be throughly setled in the assured perswasion of what we haue so plainely propounded, and prooued so plentifully, and hold it fast vnto our owne hearts, as our dutie to doe the like, if the Lord shall cast any the like occasion vpon vs, and call vs forth, to try, and declare our faith, by being put to the practice of this truth, to see whether we will so esteeme the reproach of *Christ*, and the persecution of the Saints, that we will giue ouer and abandon, the riches of the earth, and *the pleasures of sinne*, to embrace the bitternesse of those that are beloued of *God*, before the sweetest delicates of those who are abhorred of him. A time may come, when it may be our turne either to auouch this Doctrine by our conformitie therevnto, or deny the Lord who hath auouched it to be his truth. And cursed are they who stand conuinced in *Conscience*, of any truth of God, wherevnto they refuse to yeeld *obedience*.

We should doe all well then to doe (as the Wise-man
Pro. 10.14. sayth all wise men doe) to wit, [*lay vp knowledge*] euen the knowledge of this particular, to bring it into practice, that our good workes sutable to it, may make good this word of God which hath shewed it to vs, and that therein, every man may become a *Moses*, to be thus faithfull before the Lord, as he was, in this thing.

And that we may be the better brought vnto it, and haue our naughtie hearts the more happily prouoked to

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the holy purpoſe of this heavenly practiſe; let vs now proceede from the apparant prooſe of the point, to the powerfull application of the ſame, vnto all ſuch, vnto whom it doth, or may any way appertaine: *that is*, all ſorts of men, both *good* and *bad*, *Saints* and *ſinners*; ſomething it hath to ſay vnto either of them *ſeverally*, aſunder, and ſomething to them both, *ioyntly* together. There is very little truth (if any at all) that *God* reveaſeth, but it lookes every way, and is of ſome important conſequence to all perſons whatſoever, if the ſappe and iuyce of it be preſſed and wrung out, as it ought to be.

Vſe 1. Comfort to Gods children.

Let vs then in the *firſt* place conſider of what vſe it is to Gods owne people, and what fruit of comfort his bleſſed and beloved ones, doe receiue from the ſacred truth which we haue ſowne, for nothing but heavenly ioy, and ſweete conſolation, can be reaped and carryed in, to them from any thing which the Lord hath reveaſed from heaven; for it is written, [*Light is ſowne for the righteous, and ioy for the vpright in heart.*] Pſal. 97. 11.

And (to ſpeake as the truth is) what childe of GOD can ſpeake of this truth, or heare of it being ſpoken, without ſolace to his very ſoule, if he haue faith to beleeue the ſame? Certainly, if we be not comforted by it, it is onely becauſe we are not confirmed in it; were wee well reſolved of it, we could not but reioyce in the aſſurance thereof.

For why? What is it that troubles and perplexes a childe of God, but his preſent eſtate of miſery and diſtreſſe; and the worſe a mans miſery is, the more woefull is our diſtraction through the ſame, and when it comes to the *worſt*, many times we grow from diſtraction to deſperation, and beginne to throw our ſelues into forlorne and hopeles and infernall conceits touching our preſent condition, and to giue over both our ſelues, and all expecta-

pectation of ever being any more happie; the preſent cloud of our calamitie, is ſo thicke and darke, that wee can ſee no ſun-ſhine through it, nor dreame of any more good dayes during our liues, but make account to be perpetually miſerable and vnhappie, and to be in ſo bad caſe, as none can be in worſe, nor *many*, nay, ſcarce *any*, (as we thinke) in the like.

Now in this caſe, what can be more truely ſayd to the Mat.22.29. Saints, then that of *Chriſt* to the *Sadduces*, [*Yee erre not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*:] it is onely your ignorance that makes you ill conceited of the ſtate you are in, and to miſtake both it and your ſelues ſo much as you doe; did you vnderſtand the Scriptures, and the power of this truth of *God*, as wee haue made it plaine, it would ſoone be ſeene, how wyde you were from the truth of your eſtate; for, whereas you thinke (now you are at worſt) its ſcarce poſſible that any bodie ſhould be ſo bad, this truth will tell you, and teach you to know, both that you are now no worſe then any child of God may be; as alſo that no wicked man is, or can be ſo well at his *beſt*, as you are and ſhall ever be at your *worſt*.

And indeede ſo much the more ſweete and heavenly is the benefit of this doctrine, by how much it expels the deadly venime and poyſon, of one of the moſt heavie and helliſh temptations that doth vſually ſurſprize the ſoule of them that are afflicted and humbled of God. And that is, the ayme and eſtimation, they haue taken of themſelues and their eſtate, (not conſidered in it ſelfe, but) compared with others, who are wholly free, and *Note.* feele no ſuch ſorrow or extremitie as they doe: And commonly the Devill carries the eye, and ſettles the obſervation of Gods children, onely vpon ſuch impious, and prophane perſons, as eſcape the miſery whereinto they

are

are fallen; and having faſtned them vpon ſuch an obiect, he then turmoyles the minde, and tyrannizeth ouer the thoughts, and doubles, yea multiplyes the vexations of their ſoules, not ſo much that they are *in* diſtreſſe, but, moſt of all, that others are *out*, who are notoriouſly vngodly; and hereupon, their thoughts doe offer to fly in Gods face, as if he were nothing ſo gracious, or righteous, as he is magnified to be, ſeeing hee lets his *owne children* fare ſo ill, and ſuffers his enemies, who are *rebels* againſt him, and no better then *dogs* or *ſwine*, (in his account) to be as well as heart can wiſh: and if it *kindnes*, or *iuſtice*, in any earthly father to vſe his children worſe then his cattell? and if not, how much *leſſe loue* and *more wrong*, muſt it be in him that is heavenly, who makes himſelfe the mirrour of all mercy, and favour: and then as *God* is thus cenſured, ſo are wicked men applauded, and the generation of the iuſt condemned.

Satan hath not ſet vpon a few with this ſuggeſtion, and there are not many who haue beene aſſaulted, but they haue beene foyled. The ſtouteſt of *Gods* army haue ſhrunke ſhrewdly, and well neere fainted through frailty, a man would wonder to ſee ſuch mighty champions ſo miſerably diſhartened, and diſcontented, when they haue taken notice how themſelues haue beene afflicted, and other (moſt vngodly perſons) exempted from the evils wherewith they haue beene heavily laden ſo long.

David was ſo deepely diſcomfited hereat, that he began to conceit well of wicked mens eſtate, and to queſtion (yea, and condemne) his owne, and all the people of *God*, concerning this thing, when he ſaw the proſperitie of ſinners, and the miſery of himſelfe. Let himſelfe giue vs evidence how he was gaſtard, and like to haue gone quite beſide himſelf, yea to haue fallen right down,

the divell had so misled him, and tript vp his heeles, that he was even gone and ready to giue over all: wee haue the particulars related by himselfe at large in the Psal 73 1. 2. 3 4. 73 *Psalme*; where he tels vs, how this very thing had like to haue cost him an irrecoverable fall, & had wounded him almost incurably; and how much a-doe he had to bring his heart to the due consideration of this matter, and to *temper* his mind which was so mightily *distempered*, with *doting* on his owne distresses, and *dreaming* of their happines; and when he compared these together, (to wit, their welfare, and his owne affliction) he was in a heavy taking, and growing toward a hydeous resolution; even (as it were) *to hang his religion on the hedge*, and to ioyne himselfe to such as were hellishly irreligious, because at the present they were in better case then he. Neither was this temptation for a *little* time, nor did it, (during the time it held him) trouble him a *little*, but it stucke long by him, and bit the bone; insomuch that he could not either easily, or quickly, come to settle himself into better, or sounder thoughts, that he might stay himselfe vpon the truth. And why, (I pray you) did his owne *bad*, and their *good* estate, trouble and puzzle him so much? was it not because he was not either at all informed, or not well aduised of this truth we teach from *God*, who hath avouched vnto vs) as wee haue heard) that the *worst* estate of his owne people, is incomparably beyond the *best* prosperity of wicked persons? Had *David* learned this lesson well, all this labour, and danger, had beene spared, and he had beene well able, to haue waded happily through the deepest temporary vnhappines, the world could haue brought vpon him.

Nor was *David* the onely man in this conflict, but good *Ieremiah* (a man of no meane piety, or ordinary parts)

parts) he was also very sorely put too it in this particular, and never so neere a conquest in any *combate*, as in this: his owne mouth shall say how he was amazed, and put to a pittifull *non-plus*, when he considered, the course of *Gods* dispensation of these outward favours. That *God* was righteous he durst not deny, he knew it right well; but a reason why wicked men should be in rest & peace, and himselfe so wretched, hee could not any way comprehend: this he saw, that they were had in honour and *admiration*, he was in contempt and derision; hereat, he was at his wits end with wondring, and though he confest he durst not enter into disputation with *God*, yet hee is bold to aske him the question, and entreat him to tell him, how, and why, *they are in peace*, and are *planted*, & doe *prosper*, that *transgresse rebelliously?* whereas with him (and other of Gods holy ones) it was nothing so, but contrariwise all misery and calamity that could be, came vpon them; how this should be, he could not tell, he desires to talke with God about it, not being sufficient to answere and satisfie himselfe in this thing. And how came it to passe that a *Prophet* of God, of surpassing sanctity and holinesse, of extraordinary vnderstanding and knowledge, a man mighty in grace, of an impregnable spirit, was thus battered and beated downe with this weapon? why surely, for ought we can see, the onely reason was because he had not yet girt on the powerfull sheild of this precious truth, to saue him harmeles of the dreadfull dynt of that poysoned sword wherewith he hath hurt so many holy saints of the living God; had he beene armed with the evidence of this doctrine, and able to haue sayd, [*thus*] why? the very *woe* of a child of God is beyond the *best* of an vngodly man, this point had never made any scruple, nor beene occasion of any

Iere. 12. 1. 2. 3.

doubt, or demurre in his mind, himselfe had been soone satisfied, *Satan* had beene soone confuted, all, on all sides had beene so well resolved, that either there would haue beene a quicke end, or no beginning of this businesse.

Vnto these *two*, it were too easie to instance many more (in Gods booke) *as great*, and *as good* as they, who haue beene surprized in the same kinde, but it is needles to multiply more that haue beene so assaulted, for we want not, (if wee looke well about vs) those that at this day, are in like manner tempted, the temptor hauing tryed this *bayte* and found it to ensnare so *many*, makes vse of it still, and ever will, because of the prevailing experience of the same. Doth hee not come vpon *Gods* people now, and (in like manner) vpbrayd *God* to them, and them to themselues, hoping to make them weary of the way of *God*, and to encline to his course? what (saith he to a persecuted and afflicted *Christian*) is this the *God* you thus magnifie, for infinite *wisedome*, *power*, *providence*, *kindnes*, *loue*, *mercy* and *favour*, that in all these he is *admirable*, yea *incomprehensible*? and are you those redeemed, and beloved ones, for whom all this (and I know not what more) is reserved? are you his *sons*, *daughters*, his deare *spouse*, yea neere as his owne *members*? if it possible, he should be thus good, and you in so ill case, and others whom he makes you beleeue he abhors, and neglects, to enioy the common mercies which you want? How can this stand either with *his mercy*, or *your piety*? with his good promises or your godly practises? it cannot be but either *he* must not be the *God* you make account off; or *you* not the men you imagine your selues to be; certainely either *his* goodnes, or *yours* must faile, seeing so it is, that you are in *worse* case then they that are starke naught; were he such a *God*, or you such men, as is supposed, it would be otherwise then it

is, both with *you* and with *these* wicked *ones*, *they* should haue lesse prosperitie, & *you* more happines, you should be in *better* condition, and they in *worse*.

And if once he haue but brought vs to make question either of *Gods* goodnesse, or our owne, he hath enough, to make vs *wholy* miserable, in suspecting both the goodnesse of *Gods nature*, and of our *owne grace*, because he well knowes the Lord cannot endure, but doth abhorre, both his owne, and his childrens state to be mistrusted, in as much, as (besides, the detestable dishonour offred to his owne most glorious Maiestie, to be brought vnder the *distrust* and iealousie of his creature, as if he were not that he seemed to be) the *Devill* is herein gratifyed, and his lymmes are applauded, and the gracious Saints, and sonnes of the most high condemned, as if those who by the Word of God seeme to be his *best* beloved, (in regard of the many glorious things that are spoken of them) should (by his worke) appeare to be most neglected, (in regard of the many grievous things that lye vpon them) and on the other side, such as are laden with many terrible threatnings in the Scriptures, should confute all that is therein denounced against them, by the perpetuall experience of a prosperous condition for the greatest part of their dayes.

And this was the thing about which *Iobs* friends lay at him so hard from day to day, and would haue had him given vp all, and granted himselfe an hypocrite, being perswaded themselues, and doing their best to perswade him, that it was an absolute impossibilitie, and a thing simply incompatible

Both with Gods iustice and mercy,
And with Iobs religion, and piety.

That he who was (by Gods owne mouth once and Iob. 1. 8.

Iob 2. 3. againe) commended to be the best, (one of them) in the world for goodnes, should become the woefull spectacle of the whole world for extraordinary evill of affliction and distresse. But *Iob* himselfe was wonderfull happie in this passage, and knew well how it was with him before the Lord, and all that they could vrge, did not make him start *a hayre* from his integritie; hence he cals them miserable Comforters, and *Physicians* of no value; and comforts himselfe with that assurance which his soule did finde in the vndoubted evidence of his eternall happinesse, which the eye of his faith could clearely, and comfortably discerne, through the thickest of his present calamitie and tribulation.

He well knew (which we must all learne, and labour to know) that our present estate in this world is no good glasse, or spectacle to looke through, and to represent a childe of God *so* to vs, as the Lord lookes vpon him, and as before the Lord we must esteeme him; no, nothing is more deceivable, and lesse to be trusted, then the *visible* condition of any man, in respect of his *Temporalities*, which may *flow*, yea *ouerflow*, to the most prophane, and fall, and *ebbe*, even *a-dry*, to the last *drop*, from the heires of heaven, as most vsually they doe; and though they doe, yet are they much more happie when they are wholy *emptie*, then the other can be in their most abundant fulnes; and better in the *depth* of their misery, then the men of the world in their *highest straine*, and *greatest streame* of prosperitie. And were our vnderstandings so enlightened herein, that we could be stedfastly setled in the infallible perswasion hereof; this prevayling plea of the *Temptor*, would proue a meere nullitie, a very vanity, and we should be able, not onely to endure, or holde out, in such a hard time, as we cannot shun (as divers of *Gods* deare

deare children haue done) but with *Moſes*, rather make choyce of ſuch a meane ſtate, and forſake a better, to approue our obedience, then to dwell in the Tents, and enioy the delights of the vngodly, vpon *ſuch tearmes*, as ordinarily their *tenure* is taken, and holden, (betweene the *divell* and them) here in this world.

Let no mans *temporall condition* then, be the leaſt occaſion to call his *ſpirituall*, or *eternall* ſtate into queſtion, be it farre from every faithfull man to iudge according to ſuch outward and vncertaine appearance, *God* never built his goodneſſe to vs, nor our happines before him, vpon ſuch *ſand*, which will *ſwell*, and *ſincke*, vpon the ſhift of every *wind*, and ſurges of every *tyde*, the foundation of his loue is more firme and vnmooueable. And know, there is no happines in the whole earth, good enough to be the *leaſt token* of his *true* loue, nor any earthly evill vnder heaven, bad enough (even at the worſt) to diſtemper the hearts of his elect, in the leaſt, yea though all the poyſon and malignitie thereof, were poſſible to be emptied vpon one man. He that hath aſſured vs that our *worſt*, doth exceed the *beſt* of other men, would haue vs hearten our ſelues, and ſolace our ſoules herein, knowing that the true weight of this moſt worthy truth, will overpoyze and beare downe all temporary affliction that hangeth on, or preſſeth downe in this preſent evill world. Note.

Be it graunted, (*for it cannot be denyed*) that the *worſt* end of the ſtaffe is in the hand of Gods people, and that it is *ill* with them, when worſe men fare well, let the devill haue thus much yeelded, if he will diſpute the caſe; (*truth* is able to giue *error* ſome advantage, and yet *conquer* too) well, what will he hereupon inferre? what ſhall be his forced and infernall Concluſion of this our free

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conceſſion? Why this, that Gods people are in *worſe* caſe then wicked men; well, be it ſo, and what of that? Say, they are, will any thing follow to *their* true diſcomfort, whoſe ſoules the Lord would not haue made ſad? if any thing more then this, let the devill ſay his *worſt*, and produce, and preſſe it, to the *vtmoſt*, but if this be *all*, all is *nothing*: Satan is confounded, *we* are confirmed, *wicked* men are befool'd, in all this; for why? though (in ſome earthly, and temporary ſence) we may ſay, our caſe may be *worſe* then theirs, and theirs *better* then ours, yet God hath given vs to know, that in ſpirituall and heavenly conſideration, our *worſt* is better then their *beſt*, and this Propoſition we doe, and dare avouch, in the *face* of our fierceſt adverſary the devill, or the moſt furious of thoſe tyrants which he provoketh againſt vs; who thought to inferre ſome hydeous and hopeles conſequence out of theſe poore premiſſes, whereas nothing can iſſue from our perplexitie, and their peace, by any ſound evidence, but that which will be

Glorious to the Lord,
Ioyous to his people,
Grievous to the vngodly, and
Miſchievous to the devill himſelfe.

Who obſerving vs thus *completely* armed, againſt his mightieſt *engine*, muſt now, either *with ſhame* giue over his old trade of tempting, or *with ſorrow* giue over his idle hope of prevayling, and begin to thinke himſelfe leſſe able to conquer vs, and every childe of God (who hath this hope) to be *more then a Conquerour* through *Chriſt*, who hath loved them, and in his loue made thus much knowne vnto them, to make them *heartie*, in their *hardeſt* eſtate.

Rom. 8. 37.

And

And now (Beloved) is *the accuſer of* our *bretheren* (and of our ſelues) *caſt* out, and overcome; we haue *woone*, he is *downe*, for at the *loweſt*, he ſees that we know our ſelues to be farre aboue all his lymmes, even all the *higheſt*, and *happieſt*, they can be in: and ſeeing he perceiues that we now vnderſtand this truth, what hope hath he to make vs by any meanes *miſerable*, ſeeing we can beleeue that we are more happie then any of his can be, in our greateſt *miſery*. Rev. 12. 10.

And that we may be the better *enabled* in our ſelues to *overbeare* him, let vs deſcend from the *generall* notice hereof, vnto thoſe *particular* inſtances of all kindes of evill wherevnto we are incident, and wee ſhall finde true cauſe *triumphantly* to out-face him in every of them, from one to another, as we may haue occaſiō to enquire into them in order.

Put the caſe where you pleaſe, nay let *Satan* haue leaue (if you will) to particulate where *he* will, in thoſe miſeries, which he imagines may be moſt for *his advantage*, and *our damage*: whether *povertie*, or *captivitie*, or *infamy*, or *tyranny*, or *death* it ſelfe; we ſhall ſufficiently *ſolace* our ſelues, and *ſilence* him, in each of theſe.

Let vs looke a little into them ſeverally: Is not the *Povertie* of a child of *God* better then the *wealth* of the wicked? Let *Lazarus* and *Dives* be the men that ſhall decide the matter; I dare ſay you haue read, and heard of them *both*, in *Gods* Booke; the *one* is deſcribed by his penury and want, the *other* by his ſuperfluitie and abundance: the one fared deliciouſly every day, and was ſumptuouſly arayed in purple and fine linnen; the other had but rags (and ſcarce them) to cover him, and deſired but the *caſt all* or *reliques* of the rich mans table to refreſh his hungry *body*, and to fill his emptie *belly*. Now, (I pray you) *Poverty*.

which of theſe *two*, was in the better caſe, and which of their two conditions would you chuſe, all things conſidered? I ſuppoſe no man that hath heard *all the truth* that is tolde of them both, but he had much rather be in *Lazarus* poore ſtate, then haue the riches of the other, and ſo the poverty of Gods childe, is happier then the vngodly mans abundance; and that which was here but *Paraboliſcally* propounded, vnder theſe two perſons, will be found *really true* betweene any two in the world, in their condition. [*Better is* a little (ſayth *David*, firſt, and *Salomon* once and againe) *that the righteous hath, then the* plentie *and* ſtore *of a wicked man*, nay, *of many wicked men.*] Our *leaſt* doth much exceede their *moſt*, in every reſpect, whether of *money*, *meate*, *apparell*, or whatſoever.

Pſal. 37. 16. Pro 15. 16. Cap. 16. 8.

Impriſonment.

Againe, is not our *reſtraint* and *impriſonment*, better then their *libertie* and *freedome*? Let Gods childe be the priſoner, and the impious perſon be free at pleaſure; a *priſon* will be found happier to him, then a *pallace* to the other. It may ſoone be tryed betweene *Peter*, and *Herod*, the one was in hard reſtraint, even in chaynes, the other might goe where he would; yet (I warrant you) he that reades the ſtory of theſe *two*, and counts the *middle and both ends*, would rather be *Peter* in the loathſome dungeon, then *Herod* in the higheſt admiration. Baſe vermine devoure *Herod* in all his pompe, magnificence, and royaltie: the Angell of God guards *Peter* in reſtraint, and brings him out miraculouſly, and ioyfully; and this is left recorded of God to comfort vs (inaſmuch as nothing is more againſt nature, then to be caged vp, and kept in) that we might know, that our *God* can make that *reſtraint* more happie to *his*, then another mans *enlargement* can be to him. The Bird that is kept in a cage is *ſafe*, and well provided for, of all things meete to make him ſing, but

Acts. 12.

the

the *Vulture*, and *Kyte*, often prey vpon those that fly in the open firmament of heaven.

Nay, say it come to *captivitie*, (which is a straine of extraordinary restraint) put case *Gods childe* be taken captiue, and kept in slavery, and that *Gods enemy* be the party in authoritie to detayne him *there*, and to tyrannize over him in a strange Land: I make no question but the *captivitie* of *Gods* people, shall be found to be a condition more truely comfortable, then another mans *eminency*, yea *sovereignity*, though he were the King of that Countrey wherein they are kept in bondage. *Daniell* and *Nebuchadnezzar* shall decide it, the one (viz: *Daniell*) was the *captiue*, the other was the *King*, let any man say (who hath considered what is sayd of them both) which of the *two* he would chuse to be. *Surely*, if the oddes had not bin extraordinary, in the comparison, and proportion of these estates, *Moses* had made no good match, in leaving to be a *Courtier* to become a *captiue*; but he well knew that the meanest and most oppressed *Israelite* in *Egypt*, was more happie then that mighty *Monarch*, that kept them vnder. *Soveraignity* in a *Pagan*, is not cõparable to *slavery* in a *Christian*. Let *God* giue sentence by his revealed word, & it will be apparant to be a truth vndeniable and vndoubted. A *throne*, & a *crowne* cannot be so good to another, as a *cottage*, yea, a *dunghill* to those that are the Lords. Captivitie.

Againe, is not our *persecution* better then their *pleasure?* and are not our very *distresses*, beyond their *delights?* I thinke the *three children* in the fiery fornace, will soone satisfie vs for that, for they were in more comfortable plight in the midst of these *fiercest flames*, then he was who cast them in; and that the tyrant himselfe is forced to confesse, & also maketh decrees to confirme the same Persecution. Dan. 3.

vnto others, that out of his mouth, all men may know the *power* and *favour* of the Lord to his owne, in ſweetening their extreameſt bitternes; and his *wrath* and *vengeance* againſt all vngodly ones, in envenoming and poyſoning their greateſt ſweetnes. God hath many precious comforts for the *perſecuted*, but nothing but curſes and plagues for *perſecutors*. The very infamy and reproach, of ſuch as ſuffer for the truth, doth ſurpaſſe the honour and reputation of thoſe that caſt contempt vpon them; for the Lord doth *renowne* the one, & *renounce* the other: Men fawne vpon mightie tyrants with *glorious titles*, but God doth frowne vpon them as baſe and ignominious perſons. How many pages of his ſacred booke are perfumed, with the odour of their *ſweete names*, who haue beene diſgraced for *God?* and how many ſtories doe record the *rotten*, & *ſtincking* memory of their oppreſſors? the one goe for glorious *martyrs*, the other for egregious and defamed *malefactors*. And this made ſome who
Acts. 2. mockt the *Apoſtles* at the firſt, when they had *afterward* better bethought themſelues, they left mocking, and became *Diſciples*; they gaue over *reproaching*, and fell to *profeſſing* the Goſpel; and they had no reaſon *thus* to doe, had they not knowne that it had bin more excellent to haue bin an *infamous Chriſtian*, then an *honourable infidell*.

But paſſing over all theſe, and ſuppoſing the *worſt* that can come, (if the *worſt* doe come to the *worſt*) if men
Heb. 12. 4. muſt *reſiſt to bloud*, and that *Death* muſt end all the forcſaid afflictions, of povertie, impriſonment, captivitie, perſecution, infamy, and whatſoever can be endured in this life. Is not our *Death*, better then their *life?* yea, God hath ſaid it, as it may appeare in that which he hath enforced from the mouth of a moſt wicked man to witnes it. What ſay you to *Balaams* wiſh, (and that vpon his beſt thoughts)

thoughts) when he had but the taſte, and ſeene (as yet) but the glympſe of the happines, and glory of Gods people? even *Balaam* who came of purpoſe to curſe and maligne them, and therefore, (vnto him) it may well be thought, the life of *Gods* people was as bad, as a death, & worthy of his vtmoſt execeration; yet no ſooner had *God* ſhined a little vpon him, onely with ſome little *light*, (without al *life*) of this truth; but the man is more in loue with the *death* of the righteous, then with his owne *life*, & would gladly ceaſe to *liue* as he did, to *dye* as they doe; his wiſh ſhewes enough to make this good with advantage, how earneſtly doth he vtter it? [*Let my ſoule dye the death of the Righteous, let my laſt end be like vnto his*] and no man in cõmon ſence can wiſh any thing but that which either is *indeede*, (or in his apprehenſion) for his owne well-fare. Moreover, how many ſingular reſpects are there wherein, the *death* of Gods childe is to be preferred to the *life* of a wicked man? Num. 23. 10.

Our death is precious; Pſal. 116. 15.
Their death is vile:
Our death deſireable; Pſal. 15. 4.
Their life abhominable. Phil. 1. 23. 2 Pet. 2. 10.

Thus in the *laſt enemy* which is death, we overgoe the vngodly, and are, (or ought to be) ſo farre from changing *liues* with them, that we will not giue *our death* (which is the *worſt* that can befall vs in this world) for *their life*, which is the onely *darling* they deſire beyond all other, to enioy vpon the earth. 1 Cor. 15.

And ſo we haue ſeene in all theſe particulars ſeverally, how the oddes is ours in all reſpects, there's more to be got by our *greateſt evills*, then by all their *beſt good*, inſtance where you will, its evident, in every thing which can be named, or conceited.

I will now ſpeake but once more; and that ſhall be of all, and every of our evils *ſimm'd* vp together, and gathered into a *totall*, that as in the *Items* before, ſo now in them all at once, it may appeare, that the whole maſſe of our miſery, or the greateſt meaſure thereof, that can be *powred in*, *preſſed downe*, even till it run over vpon vs, is more happy, & much better, then all the good things, that can be caſt vpon wicked perſons, yea though the whole world ſhould empty all her fulnes, and excellency, to giue them the *largeſt* contentment, that could be wiſhed.

And we will giue you ſufficient ſecurity for the truth hereof, in one that is beyond all exception, to wit, *Ieſus Chriſt*, who was a man of ſorrowes, a mirrour of miſeries, in whom all kinde of calamity did combine, and ſettled it ſelfe vpon his ſacred perſon, (conſidering as he was man) ſeizing both vpon ſoule and body at once, & in inexpreſſible manner vpon both, and either. It would bee too tedious to particulate thoſe ſeverall paſſions which he felt, neither indeede is it more poſſible for vs to *declare them*, then to *endure them*: How was he handled, and humbled, *of God*, *of men*, *of devills*?

Of God, in iuſtice, ſeeing he ſuffered in mans ſtead.
Of men, in malice, being inſtigated by the divell.
Of the divel, in outrage, being permitted of God to afflict him.

The *ſeverity* of *Gods* law, the *extreamity* of mans cruelty, the vtmoſt of the divels *tyranny*, was exerciſed vpon him; betweene theſe *three* he carryed (*at once*) the *vengeance* of heaven, the *malignity* of the earth, and the *deſpite* of hell, all theſe *envenomed vyalls* being *full* of his fathers feirceſt wrath, and moſt dreadfull indignation even to the loathſome lees, and poyſonous dregs, were powred

powred vpon his precious ſoule and body, ſo that hee was *all over* drentcht into the moſt wofull condition that a creature could be, as carrying the maledictiõ of the moſt mighty God, and that whole curſe, which was due, (*by diuine law*) to man-kindes corrupt nature in the elect.

Now take him at the very *worſt*, and vtmoſt of all this evill, imagine him as betrayed by *Iudas*, apprehended by the *High Prieſts* ſervants, pynnioned, and arraigned before *Pilate*, and there reproached, blindfolded, bufeted, and every way moſt barbarouſly abuſed, with thornes, rods, and whatſoever could be done to his ignominy, and miſery, follow him from thence to his *Croſſe* and thinke what he endured there, in *ſight* of all men, beſides the *vnſeene ſufferings* of his ſoule, before in the garden, and now againe, which made him fill the firmament of heaven with ſtrong, and ſtrange cryes, as being *ſimply* inſufferable to a meere creature, (without the vtter deſtruction of the ſame) vnleſſe it had a *Diety* to ſupport it. And in this baſeſt, bittereſt, and moſt heavie condition, ſet by him ſome one among the ſons of the *mighty*, and conceit *that man* in a compleat contrariety to all this, put vpon *him* all the pompe, pleaſure, principality, power, honour, and whatſoever heart would haue; *dignifie* him with the dominion of the whole world, and let all the crownes vnder heaven be brought into one, and ſet vpon his head, nay, *diefie* him) as *Herod* would haue beene) and make him the onely MONARCH *of mankinde* and that nothing may be wanting to his abſolute welfare in a temporary, and terrenall eſtate, let all *mynes* yeelde him *treaſure*, all fruites giue him *pleaſure*; yea thinke him as much more happy aboue all men, as *Chriſt* was more miſerable then a-

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ny man. And when *theſe two* ſhall ſtand together (thus) in thy thoughts, lay which of the *two* thou iudgeſt in better caſe, and in whethers eſtate thou wouldeſt chuſe to ſtand; either in *Chriſts* at the *worſt*, or this mans at the *beſt*. I make no queſtion but every true Chriſtian would quickly determine the caſe, and make his choyſe, and none but the *Atheiſt*, or infidell, would take any part with the other. Why then, is it not plaine that the greateſt *heape* of moſt heavy vnhappines, being piled vp together, and throwne vpon the perſon of a childe of God, is more light, and eaſie to beare, beyond all compariſon, then *mountaines*, or *mynes*, yea, or whole *worlds* of wealth, and whatſoever elſe of the beſt things, that can be either deviſed, or deſired, to fill the ſenſuall heart of ſinful man. Theſe *two* then, (thus conſidered) doe cleare the caſe, and make our comfort vnqueſtionable, that all our evill exceedeth all their good, and that therefore, though the Lord, doe pleaſe to lay his heavy hand vpon his *owne*, & to let thoſe *profane* ones goe free, and vntouched, and ſo *to ſeeme* to be in better caſe then we, yet now wee ſee not onely by proofe of *evidence*, but alſo by powerfull *experience*, that the *worſt* we haue, is better then the *beſt*; our *miſeries* are beyond their *mercies*, yea, our *hell*, exceedes their *heaven*, and ſo they *fillily* inſult over vs, but we *iuſtly* over them; and *Satan* is but a foole to turmoyle vs with theſe perplexed thoughts, of the wel-being of his vaſſals, and our ill condition, vnleſſe hee could overturne, and take away the ground of this glorious truth, which overturnes him, and makes vs to glory and triumph in our moſt grievous tribulations, vnder the bleſſed hope of much preſent, and of infinite and everlaſting felicity to come to vs, for ever and ever, in due time.

And beloved, vpon theſe premiſſes (*thus conſidered*) wee

wee ought to be ſo farre from wondering at our miſeries, that we ſhould rather turne all our admiration vpon our ſelues, and begin to wonder at our owne weakenes, ignorance, and infidelity, and to bewayle our wonderfull want of faith in this heavenly truth; which if it were well beleeved, and applied of vs, might and would, be ſo farre from encreaſing our cares, that it would rather cauſe vs to [*account it exceeding ioy when we fall into many tribulations*] and in ſtead of bleſſing vngodly men in our thoughts, at their *beſt*, wee would bleſſe God for the baſeſt, and moſt dejected ſtate whereinto it ſhould pleaſe him to ſuffer them to caſt vs: did we know all, we would ſoone be *weary* of their *welfare*, and moſt willing to vndergoe that condition which is reputed moſt wretched and wofull. James 1. 2.

Shall we lanch a litle further into the deepe, and diſcover the *rich*, *rare*, and *hidden* treaſures of this heavenly truth? that by our knowledge of them, we may truely finde, that [*as our afflictions doe abound for Chriſt, our conſolations ſhould abound*, (yea ſuperabound) *much more, by Chriſt*, and alſo, that the further we wade in the particulars of our woe, we ſhall ſtill deſcry more abundance of bleſſed ioy, and therein wee may *ſwime* and bath our ſelues, in our greateſt bitternes, and by it, be ſweetely ſaved from ſinking in that *ſea* of ſorrow & diſtreſſe, wherein ſo many doe moſt miſerably (*as in a bottomleſſe gulfe*) drowne and overwhelme themſelues *irrecoverablely*. Aſſuredly if we come to ſurvey the *happy*, and *worthy*, differences of our *worſt* eſtate, and their *beſt*, and what ſingular & ſurpaſſing advantages we haue of them every way; wee ſhould (at once) gather both much abundant aſſurance of this truth, and alſo evidence of incomparable comfort from the ſame: inaſmuch as it will vndeniable- 2 Cor. 1. 5.

ly appeare, that in our *heavieſt* eſtate, our ſtate is ſo *heavenly*, as may, and will, (being rightly ballanced) wholy over-beare all diſcomforts that can come vpon vs; & teach vs to *trample* tribulation vnder our feete, as a thing more fit for our holy contempt and ſcorne, then for our carnall care or feare.

Let vs then make our approach, and drawe neere to ſome *few*, of thoſe *innumerable* particulars, which wee might readily produce; inſtancing in ſuch onely, as for evidence are moſt *vnqueſtionable*, and for conſequence moſt *comfortable*. And the neerer wee come, the more will our ioy ariſe, and encreaſe vpon vs, by the bright beames of that bleſſed and celeſtiall *light*, that ſhineth from heaven ſo *gloriouſly*, in every ſeverall *difference* and *advantage* betweene their *beſt*, and our *worſt* eſtate. For you muſt know, that as the *difference*, ſo the *advantage*, betweene our condition and theirs, is exceeding great, and beyond all dimenſion, yet we will ayme and gueſſe, as we are able, to vnfold ſuch as we ſhall find moſt plain, and moſt plentifull to our propoſe in hand. To come to them then: The firſt is this.

1. *A childe of God is bleſſed in his* worſt eſtate, *and an vngodly man is accurſed in his* beſt.

1 Advantage.

Can there bee a *wider* difference, or a *worthier* advantage then this? the difference betweene things *bleſſed* & *curſed* of God, is the moſt that may be, for God makes theſe *two*, the vttmoſt extreames, both of all *naturall*, *ſpirituall*, and *eternall* good, and evill, and the aduantage is the ſame with the difference, that is to ſay, as much as can be vttered or expreſſed: but let vs trie the truth hereof in this particular, whereof we ſpeake.

And that we may ſoone doe, for wee haue a moſt ſure word of our Lord and Saviour *Ieſus Chriſt* to ſecure our ſoules

ſoules of the ſame, Looke we into that part of his owne moſt excellent *ſermon* which we finde *Luke* 6. where he bringeth in, both the righteous, and the ſinner, and preſenteth either of them vnto vs, in their owne habite. Luke 6.

The godly at the worſt, ver. 20 21 22 23.
The vngodly at the beſt, ver. 24 25 26.

The former (*viz*: the faithfull) are conſidered in their *Poverty*, *Hunger*, *Sorrow*, and *Contempt*, but they are bleſſed in them all: no Poverty but bleſſed. [*Bleſſed bee yee* poore, ver. 20.] no Hunger but bleſſed [*Bleſſed be ye that* hunger, ver. 21.] no Sorrow but bleſſed, [*Bleſſed be yee that* mourne, ver. 21.] no Contempt but bleſſed [*Bleſſed are yee when men* revile you &c ver. 22 23.] And (beloved) are not they a bleſſed people, and their ſtate bleſſed every way, whoſe very *croſſes*, yea *curſes* (as the world accounts them) are bleſſed? Can they want any thing to make them *infinitely bleſſed*, who ſee very want of ſome bleſſings is *ſoueraignly bleſſed* to them? Had not he [*who is God to be bleſſed for ever*] preached this point, who could haue conſented, & ſet to his ſeale that it had beene true? but himſelf was *hungry*, and bleſſed; *poore*, *ſorrowfull*, *contemptible*, and bleſſed in *all* theſe, he ſpake what himſelf *in our nature* did feele, & what his members (partakers of his nature) *by grace* ſhould feele; to wit, that if the world & the diuell will keepe them every way perplexed; he will ever keepe *them* (as God his father kept *him*) happy and bleſſed. If they muſt be *poore*, and *hungry*, *grieued*, & *defamed*, it ſhalbe. Rom. 1. 25

Bleſſed hunger,
Bleſſed poortie,
Bleſſed reproach, and
Bleſſed griefe,

doe the world and the Diuell what they can, when they haue done their *worſt* to Gods children, the *worſt* they

can doe, ſhall be well, and happy to them.

The latter (viz: the profane) they, (on the other ſide) are ſet out to the *vtmoſt*, the *moſt* is made of them that can be, we haue them brought in ruffling in their *Riches*, *Society*, *Pollitie*, and *Honour*, but they are wofull in al theſe: no wealth but wofull, [*woe be to you that are rich*: ver. 24.] no fulnes but wofull, [*woe be to you that are full*, ver. 25] no mirth but wofull, [*woe be to you that laugh*, ver. 25.] no honour, but wofull, [*woe be to you when men applaud you*, ver. 26.] And are not they a wofull people, to whom all *wealth* and *welfare* is *wofull* whoſe very comforts & *bleſſings* (as the world accounts them) are *accurſed*? Can they want any thing to make them *infinitely* miſerable, whoſe very *mercies*, are *miſeries* to them? The Lord hath entayled an eternall *woe*, to all thoſe things wherein they place their *welfare*. Their *bleſsings* and Gods *curſe*, cannot be ſevered; they are ſimply inſeparable, and ſhall ſo cleaue vnto each other for ever, that as they can haue no ioy in any happines appertayning to *others*, ſo they ſhall haue none, in that which they poſſeſſe *themſelues*; but whenſoeuer they read, or heare any thing, out of Gods booke touching any temporall benefit comming towards them, it muſt be vnderſtood *with a vengeance* adhæring to it, (ſo farre as their part goeth in it) before they ſhall enioy it.

Now what a *mercy* is it, to haue every *bitter* thing *ſweetned*, every *evil bleſſed*? And what a *miſery* is it to haue every *ſweete* thing *poyſoned*, every *good* thing *accurſed*?

This is our *firſt* advantage, and the odds ſtanding vpon theſe tearmes, of an *evill* ſtate *bleſſed*, and a *good* condition *accurſed*, every *idiot* would ſoone determine which of the *two*, to chuſe; Is not a *good* eſtate to be deſired on any tearmes, & a *bad*, on none? I think every man would be

be glad of a *bleſsing* vpon any condition, and entertayne a *curſe*, vpon none. And now judge (I pray you) betweene *Saints*, and *ſinners*, which of both are in better caſe, howſoever it ſtand with either of them, in the *beſt* the one may haue, & the *worſt* that can befall the other; and according to this apparant evidence, giue vpright ſentence, whether the *moſt vnhappie* among the children of God, be not in more happy caſe, then the *moſt happie* among the children of this world.

And thus farre concerning our *firſt* advantage. The *ſecond* is this.

2. Advantage.

2. *A childe of God at his* worſt, *hath no true, or reall evill vpon him, but onely the appearance, or outſide of the ſame. A wicked man at his* beſt, *hath nothing but that which ſeemeth to be good, and is* (indeed) *evill.*

And this advantage is moſt evident on either part, and vndeniable in both. For *firſt*, for the childe of *God*, he hath his part & intereſt in *Chriſt*, who having taken part of all the evils incident to the elect, hath by his own ſuffering and enduring of them, deprived them of their *venome* & *poyſon*, pulled out their *ſting*, and aboliſhed whatſoever was *truely evill* in them, and ſanctified them ſo, as that he *alone* did beare them as *curſes*, we (at the *moſt*, and the *worſt*) doe vndergoe them *onely* as *croſſes*; vnto *him*, they were as iuſt puniſhments for vs, vnto *vs*, they are nothing but mercifull chaſtiſements: they were due to him (in our *nature*) by law, and became part of the *malediction* thereof; they come to vs, onely as tokens of kindnes and loue, ſo ſaith the ſpirit of God once and againe. Pro. 3. 12. Heb. 12. 10.

Againe, for the vngodly man, he is miſerably gul'd, and coſned, as concerning his condition, having ſome things which *ſeeme* to be *good*, but being well ſifted, and ſearched into, are found to be nothing but reall *evils*.

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For why? we know, ſinne and rebellion did not onely bring in *plagues*, *wants*, and *miſeries*; but alſo it brought *miſerieſe*, and *rottennes*, and *wretchednes*, vpon the good things *God* created for vs, and made them evill to vs, not in their *priuatiue* alone, but even in our *poſſeſſion* of them alſo, as was noted in the former aduantage. Now this curſe that by ſinne cleaveth to the bleſſings of God, is (as was alſo aforeſayd) inſeparable, to the ſinner; becauſe his ſinne is not remooved *from him*, or ſatisfied *for him*, by *Chriſt*, vnto God, in whom, he himſelfe having no part or portion, but remayning vnder the power and rage of *ſinne*, and right and poſſeſſion of *Satan*, ſo doe alſo, all thoſe things likewiſe which he doth enioy, remayne vnder the malediction of *Almightie God*, and in *them*, he is as much deceiued as he is in *himſelfe*, who though he ſeeme to be, (at leaſt to himſelfe) *as good* as any, yea, *it may be* better, (in his owne conceit) then the *beſt* of the Lords beloued ones; is yet, but a *lymme* of Satan, an ympe of hell, and no ſuch man as he made account he was. So that himſelfe is *no ſuch perſon*, and all he hath, are *no ſuch things*, as they are conceited to be, being reputed good, but diſcouered to be ſtarke naught. Looke what wee are before the Lord, ſuch are all things to vs which we haue, they can be no other in his ſight.

Note.

But ſhall we heare the *Holy Ghoſt* ſpeake in this point, and that from them (or rather *in them*) whoſe experience doth *actually* iuſtifie that which we doe avouch. Looke (I pray) and obſerue, yea admire, the Apoſtle *Pauls* euidence in this particular, he was a man that had tryed the *worſt* that could be endured, and the *worſt* (he ſaith) of that he felt, is onely *this*, that it onely *ſeemed* to be worſe then *indeede* it was found to be; nay, (on the contrary,) that it was but a *ſhaddow* of evill, and a meere *appearance*

pearance thereof, without any *ſubſtance*, or reall ſence of the ſame at all. Take we notice of his words, as we finde them, and we ſhall ſee this point impregnable. he ſpeaks (purpoſely) of his miſeries, perſecutions, and diſtreſſes, of all ſorts, and in them all, what ſaith he? why even this, that the *worſt* of them were not the things themſelues they ſeemed to be, but onely ſome *ſhewes*, or outſides of them: their ſorrow was no more but this, [*As ſorrowing and yet all wayes reioycing*] their poverty but this, [*As being poore, yet making many rich*] their want but thus. [*As hauing nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things*] and ſo of the reſt, inſomuch, that he breaks out moſt affectionately, *ver.* 11. *O Corinthians, &c.* As if he ſhould ſay, Oh deare Chriſtians, if you did but know how *well* it is with vs at our *worſt*, how the Lord doth groſſely infatuate the *Divell*, and befoole wicked men, in ſuffring them to conceit how vnhappie we are, through the evils they caſt vpon vs; and how he doth graciouſly comfort vs, in taking away the *evill*, of all theſe *evils* from vs, ſo as that, wee are nothing ſo afflicted, or diſtreſſed, as they dreame vs to be, but (on the quite contrary) wee are cheared, comforted, and encouraged, that we can, and do reioyce exceedingly, in the vtmoſt extremities of *all*, that they are able by might, or malice, to inflict vpon vs: if this were but knowne to you as it is felt of vs, you would reioyce together with vs, and be perſwaded (as we are) that no more miſery can come to a true *Chriſtian* for the profeſſion of Religion, then may remayne, and well conſort with all the ioy, peace, ſolace, and happineſſe, which heart can wiſh And in this declaration the Lord hath enlarged our hearts to tell you *that truth* which the world cannot receiue, nor beleeue; to wit, that the *worſt* we can *endure*, may conſiſt, with the *beſt* wee can *deſire*. The *miſchiefes* men

2 Cor 6. 8. 9. 10. 11.

men bring vpon vs, of ſorrow, want, &c. are but *Pictures* or *images* of theſe things; but the ioy, fulnes, &c. the Lord giues in the middeſt of them all, are true, and reall, ſound and ſubſtantiall conſolations.

But now on the other ſide, for the vngodly, it is not ſo with them: all their good things are evills *indeede*, how good ſoever they ſeeme to be. Haue we not ſhewed them to be all *in the generall* denounced as curſes to them, from *Gods* owne mouth, *Deut.* 28. And if we come to *particulars*, will not every ſeverall *bleſſing*, prooue a *curſe* vnto them, vpon due ſearch?

Pro. 14. 13. They haue *myrth*, but ſuch as [*in the middeſt whereof the heart is heavie*], and doe they not droope many times inwardly, when outwardly they are frolike and ioviall? God ſaith they doe, and ſome of them haue ſhewed it to be too true; it is but *mock-myrth* they haue, lent them *by Satan*, to delude them a little while, and to be taken from them *by God*, at a moments warning, whenſoever he ſhall but offer to frowne vpon them in the leaſt.

They haue *wealth*, (and the world ſayes, that they who haue that, haue the bleſſing of God) but what is their wealth? *Seemingly good*, yea that which makes them the beſt men, in mens iudgement: but if you will be iudged by *God*, who hath ſpoken it, he cals it by ſo many *odious Epithets*, as muſt needs perſwade any man that it is nothing leſſe then *good indeed*: take a few for a taſte, is it not called

Hurtfull, Eccle. 5. 12.
Deceitfull, Mat. 13. 22.
Dangerous, 1 Tim. 6. 17.
Filthy lucre, 1 Pet. 5. 2.
Vnrighteous mammon, Luk. 16.

With a multitude more of moſt *loathſome* appellations

to

to the ſame purpoſe, by any one of which, nothing that is *truely good*, was ever entituled.

And what we ſay of their *wealth*, and *myrth*, might be ſayd of the *honour*, and *pleaſure*, of theſe men, and of all their contentments whatſoever; all and every of which, vpon true and ſerious inquiſition, would be found no ſuch matters, as they are made account to be, in the weake imaginations of wicked men; but things, quite contrary to the great opinion they haue of them.

Now what a *wide difference*, and what a *worthy advantage* is here? that a childe of Gods *worſt*, is but *ſeeming evill*, and *true good*, and an vngodly mans *beſt*, is but *ſeeming good*, and *true evill?* Surely a little deliberation would ſerue, to a full reſolution of any mans choice of theſe *two*, which he would haue, whether the former condition, or the latter. And this is our *ſecond* advantage. The *third* followeth. And that is this.

3. *That the ſoule of a childe of God* is ſafe, *in the worſt eſtate he can be in, in this life; but a wicked mans ſoule is in* moſt danger *when his eſtate is at beſt.* 3. Advantage.

Let the Lord ſpeake for *both*, out of his bleſſed Word, we know he will not, nay, cannot but ſay true for either ſide. For the faithfull and their ſafetie *firſt*. Chriſt foretels *Peter* of as much miſery as might befall him, when he ſignifies vnto him, that [*Satan had a deſire to wynnow him* (with the reſt) *as wheate*] that is, throughly, exactly, to the vtmoſt; by which words he meant to giue *Peter* to vnderſtand what miſeries he was like (for the truths ſake) to vndergoe, and how it came to paſſe accordingly, by Gods permiſſion of the *Deuill*, and the power, and malice of his adhærents, the ſtory of his deniall before *Chriſts* death; and the relation of his life, and death, in the booke of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, doth abundantly Luk. 22. 31.

 eui-

evidence, and declare. But wherewith did *Christ* comfort *Peter*, when he told him of this outward discomfort and
Vers. 32. danger? why even with this very thing, [*But I haue prayed for thee, that thy faith faile not*] which was as much as to say; though many persecutions, and perils may surprize thee, to the endangering of thy life, even vnto the death, yet know, thy soules estate shall be secured, the power of grace *in thee*, the assurance of glory *to thee*, shall in no wise faile, that shall stand fast for ever, whatsoever becommeth of thy temporall part, which will perish.

And not to *Peter* alone, was thus much spoken, but our *Lord Iesus Christ* layd as much to all that are of vp-
Ioh. 10. right hearts, when he spake that Parable of the Shepheard and the Sheepe, whereof we reade in the Gospell. He compares himselfe to the *good Shepheard*, & his Saints to his *Sheepe*: now because no creatures doe more miscarry through the violence, crueltie, and outrage, of deuouring beasts, then *sheepe* doe, and none are in so much danger to be torne in pieces as they, and no *sheepe* that men haue, are in halfe the danger that *Christs sheepe* are; *Christ* doth of purpose prouide, to prevent (I say not the danger it selfe, as it be meant, that never, *Wolfe*, or *Beare*, should come neere his fold, but) that *feare*, that might follow the danger, whereunto they are incident, saying
Vers. 26. [*my Father who gaue them to me is greater then all, and none can take them out of my Fathers hand*] As if he should tell them, it were very possible, easie, and ordinary, for tyrants to breake into the fold, and fetch away a *sheepe*, or two, and scatter (if not deuoure) a whole flocke; but (sayth *Christ*) though your fleeces should be shorne, yea though your flesh should be torne, and you taken from *house* to *house*, yea from the earth; yet know, that your *best* part is *safest*, your soules shall none be able to touch, or take

out

out of my Fathers hand, who holdeth you fast, and will not let you goe from himselfe, vpon any tearmes; but will [*hold you by his right hand, and guide you by his counsell, and afterwardes bring you to glory,*] though it may be through the *Butchers* hands. Psal. 73. 23. 24.

And the Apostle *Peter* himselfe tells vs, (it may well be out of the happy experience, of the feeling of that which *Christ* sayd to himselfe before) that the Saints of God in those times did reioyce (and that in the midst of many heavie temptations) with ioy *vnspeakable and glorious*, because they were secured (touching their soules estate) of that immortall, and never fading inheritance, which was reserved for them (*through the favour of God*) in the heavens, and they preserved (*through the power of God*) vnto it. In some *vncomfortable* heavines they were, because of their present afflictions, but the ioy they felt by this blessed assurance of their soules estate, was so much, that it was *vnspeakeable*.

But now for the vngodly and the sinner, on the other side, the case is altered with *them* in this thing; his bodie and state, may be both very secure, and every thing may goe with him, as hee would haue it, he may be planted, and rooted, and growe rancke and encrease *mightily*, in all contentments to the desire of his heart, but in the meane while, though all his externall things seeme to be built on the *rocke*, yet his soules estate is founded on the *sand*, and that so *loosely*, that every puffe of winde, every waue of water, beares it downe, by reason of the perpetuall perill wherin it is.

We haue too many witnesses of this woful truth: *A whole world* fell at once, when they thought themselues firme, & fast in the daies of *Noah*; neither were the bodies of thē

1 Pet. 4. 6. all neerer *drowning*, then the ſoules (I will not ſay of all, for the Apoſtle ſeemes to me, to controle it, but) of the moſt of them, were to *damnation*.

Iſa. 5. 15. The *Prophet Iſaiah*, brings in a merry crew of ſuch as neither *cared* for, nor *feared*, any thing, but paſſed their time with merriment and muſicke, and ſo exceeded in iollity as it paſt: but on a ſuddaine, the next newes we heare of theſe *good-fellowes*, is that [*Hell had enlarged it ſelfe, and opened her mouth without meaſure to receiue them*] as if hell were hungry for them, and could not be ſatisfied till it had them; and are not they in moſt danger, after whom hell is thus eager?

The *rich glutton* in the Goſpell, was ſo well lin'd, and growne ſo warme in his wooll, having jnn'd all his corne, enlarged every barne, and brought all things ſo about, that now he was at hearts-eaſe, and could let himſelfe *a leaſe* for many yeares, of peace, ſafetie, fulnes, and all kinde of contentment; as if he thought, that not a man among a thouſand was better vnder-laid then himſelfe, and that, *as Dauid once dream'd*) his rocke was made ſo ſtrong, that there had beene no ſtirring of it; alas, what plight was his ſoule in, all this while? No ſooner had he breathed out the words that argued his conceited *ſafetie*, but inſtantly another voyce was heard from heaven, a voyce *dolefull*, *heavie*, and *terrible*, arguing his *dangerous*, nay, his *deſperate*, nay, his *damned* eſtate, now imminent, and hanging over his head, and immediately to be executed vpon him, [*thou foole this night ſhall they take away thy ſoule*] was ever man *neerer* miſchiefe, that thought himſelfe *ſo farre* from it? he talkes of many yeares happines; God tels him of that perdition that the Prophet Iſa. ſpeakes of [*deſtruction ſhall come vpon the wicked, and he ſhall not ſee the morning thereof*] that is, ſuch confuſion as ſhall

ſhall ſoone come, and make quicke diſpatch of all, when it doth come.

Thus are the ſoules of Gods Saints bound faſt vp [*in the bundle of life*] by the Lord himſelfe, the Lord of life; who hath *bound* himſelfe, and his holineſſe, to ſaue them wholy harmeles, at the *worſt* that can come vnto them in this world. But for the ſoules of wicked perſons, they are in wofull plight, in their bodies beſt eſtate, and lie ſo ſcattered, neglected, & vnregarded, (as things of naught) that *God* in iuſtice, lets them alone to be ſeized by *Satans* malice, to be a prey to that deuouring Lyon, who will ſoone make euerlaſting havock of them in hell.

And this is the *third* difference, and the Saints *third* advantage, beyond all vngodly men, wherein how eaſie is it to determine, who hath the better end, or which is the happier ſtate? any man that hath but a mans ſoule, indued *with reaſon*, will ſoone preferre ſafety to danger in themſelues, but whoſoever hath a Chriſtians ſoule ſeaſoned *with Religion*, will preferre the former vpon any tearmes, even the very *worſt*, and accept the latter vpon no tearmes, no not the *beſt*. The *fourth* advantage followeth.

4. *A childe of God at the* worſt *hee can be in, in this world hath no true cauſe of feare: And a wicked man at his* beſt, *is in a ſtate moſt fearefull.* 4 Advantage.

The moſt afflicted condition of the faithfull is voyd of feare, and the fayreſt eſtate of a wicked man is full of feare. Gods booke giues abundant teſtimonie of both; fully freeing the Saint from feare, and filling the ſinners heart with little elſe. Let vs take notice of that which is reuealed for the people of God in this particular.

The Prophet *Iſaiah*, foretels marueilous miſery vnto the Church, vnder the names of fire, and water, both Iſay 43. 1. 2. 3.

which doe resemble, both great distresses, and great abundance of them also: you know they are merciles and outragious creatures, that doe wholy burne, and vtterly ouerturne, all they preuaile vpon; and like vnto them must the calamities be, that are likened (to vs) by them. Now, though the very naming of *fire*, and *water*, of *floods*, and *flames*, (especially to this end, to be *metaphors* of more heavy miseries) were enough to terrifie and affright men, and to cause feare to ouerflow all hope of any happines; yet the Lord will in no wise haue his children afraid, but layes it vpon them by expresse inhibition here, (as he also doth many a time else where) [*Feare not O Iacob my seruant*] and because this might seeme an exceeding *strange* iniunction, he giues them a *strong* and excellent reason for it: [*For I am with thee, the waters shall not drowne, the fire shall not burne thee &c.*] Behold, when he tels them of things most *fearefull*, he will not haue them feare at all.

And the *Apostle* is of the same mind, with the *Prophet*, writing to the Church at *Philippi*, (and in those daies, the times were terrible, tyranny and extreame persecution prevayled exceedingly vpon all such, as could be found to professe *Christianity*) and exhorting them [*in nothing to feare* the *aduersaries*] (for [*our*] is not *originally* expressed). Obserue how *generall* the exhortation is, both touching the aduersaries, and the things to be feared in them [*in nothing, feare the aduersaryes*] let them be *who* they may be, never so merciles, feirce, or inhumane: let their rage be *what* it will be, never so vile, villanous, dyreful, yea diabolical, yet whē both are come to the *most*, & *worst*, that can be, neither is worth fearing. Phil. 1.28.

In like manner, *Iohn* writing to the Church of *Smyrna* giues them the same comfortable counsell, and encouragement

ragement, against their persecutions now approaching, saying, [*Feare nothing that thou shalt suffer*] and yet he tels them that their tribulation shall be so extreame, and extraordinary, as if the *divell* were broke loose among them, and come from *hell it selfe*, to make the earth *a kinde of hell* vnto them, (for in what sence their tormentors are called *Divels*, their torments may be called *hell*) and yet he would not haue them feare, at all, though he tell them of that which would feare, yea affright, yea (almost) amaze any body, to thinke that their enemies are *divells*, that is, so exceedingly surpassing and beyond all ordinary oppressors, that none is *bad enough* to represent them, but the *divell* himselfe.

These are the *generall acquittances* that the Lord hath given his servants to free them from all feares in al afflictions: yea, let them seeme never so *fearefull*, or *infernall*, they are not all of them (no not at the worst) worth fearing in the least [*Thou drewest neere* (saith good Ieremiah) *in the day of my trouble, and saydst vnto me Feare not*, and that when I was, *in the low dungeon*] [*Though I walk in the valley of the shaddow of death*, (that is, in the most discomfortable state of death it selfe) yet I will *feare no evill*] saith good *David*. And in a word) our *Lord Iesus Christ* gaue this for one among those many most gracious lessons he left behind him [*Feare not them*, (let the men be as many, as mighty, as malicious, as they may be) *that can kill the body*] (be their maner of killing, as tyrannous, torturous, yea barbarous, and cruell as it can be) as if hee would say, neither persecutors, nor persecutions of any kinde, are cause of any feare in the faithfull; hee who spake it (*as man*) well knew what hee sayd, (*as God*) and therefore we stand bound to obey him as *Christ*, both *God* and *man*; knowing right well, that if any thing

Lam. 3. 57. 56. 57. Psal 23. 4. Mat. 10. 28.

thing in mans power, might haue beene iuſt matter of feare, to the faithfull, hee would not haue layd this iniunction vpon them; but being *man*, and acquainted with humane fraitety, and being *God*, having command ouer ſuch corruptions, as hee knew would flow from the ſame; he forbids *all feare*, in *all caſes*, becauſe no ſuch feare in vs, can conſiſt with the freedome of his graces; 1 Iohn for as true *loue*, ſo true *faith* [*caſteth out feare*,] & ſo doth every ſaving grace which he hath giuen vs.

But now on the other ſide the feare of the profane doth ouerflow him at his *beſt*, and in the fulleſt ſtreame of his externall happines, it breakes in vpon him to the diſturbance of his heart, yea to the fearefull deſtroying of himſelfe, even when he feares nothing.

Pharaoh followed *Iſraell* with a reſolved mind to repoſſeſſe and re-enſlaue them vnto him for ever, he hath all the ſucceſſe, heart can wiſh, the ſea is holden vpp for him, by the ſame *miraculous* hand of the *Almighty*, which kept it for his owne people to paſſe ouer, why ſhould he feare any *ordinary* danger of drowning who had an *extraordinarie* meanes of preſervation? and now that hee ſees God to ſeeme (at leaſt) to favour him, he is bold & adventurous, and feares not, but hee may follow them cloſe; but you know the *fearefull* iſſue of this *feare-les* attempt, to wit, his owne, and his peoples helples overthrow, in the midſt of that ſea, wherin he ſuppoſed himſelfe as ſafe, as Gods Saints were, and beſides the woefull periſhing of his body, the loſſe of his ſoule was moſt heavy of all.

Belſhazzar, was were he would be (you know) when hee had his Princes, his Peeres, his Wiues, and Concubines, about him, to *quaffe*, *ſwill*, and *carouſe*, in the ſacred veſſells of Gods houſe; how *frolike*, *iouiall*, and *merry* that

that King was, we may eaſily conceiue, and how farre he had put away all feare of any diſmall accident from him, we may alſo well imagine. Howbeit beholde, when he ſuſpected, nay ſurmized, nothing, that might any way diſaffect, much leſſe amaze him, he hath ſuch a ſuddaine, and dreadfull obiect in his eye, as the like hath never beene heard, or read off before; a mooving hand, writing *wofull things* againſt him on the wall; and therewith was he ſo diſtempered, terrified, and in ſuch a taking, as his *chattering teeth*, his *throbbing heart*, his *knocking knees*, (and the reſt of his *quaking* members though not mentioned) may ſignifie the ſtate of his perplexed ſpirit, and diſtracted minde.

It were moſt eaſie to multiply many of this feareſull crew, whom the Lord hath accurſed many wayes, and among the reſt, with ſuch forlorne, nay infernall *feares*, as many a time are threatned vnto them from him, who is FEARE it ſelfe, even the moſt *feareſull and terrible* GOD, who hath ſhewed all men, how farre he can, and doth, and will, forever, keepe them (even at their *beſt*) vnder the bondage of *baſe feare*; ſhewing himſelfe vnto them evermore, both in his *word*, by thoſe terrifying titles of a *Iudge*, an *Avenger*, a *Conſuming fire*; and in his *worke*, by thoſe amazing, and ſoule diſtracting *accidents*, which doe moſt vnexpectedly overtake them, and are (as it were) the very *beginnings of hell* vnto them, wherein there ſhall be an infinite and endles (I ſay not *conſummation*, but) *combination*, of all *feareſull* things for ever to abide and abound, vpon them.

And this is the *fourth difference*, betweene the righteous and the irreligious, and the *fourth advantage* wee (who are Gods) haue of the other. The faithfull are *free* from feare, the profane are *full* of it; it hath ſcarce,

And ought not to haue at all) *a being*, in thoſe that are the Lords, and belong to his loue, and in the reſt nothing is more powerfull, not onely *being* in them, but being the greate[r] *predominant* that beareth rule, and overbeareth; both themſelues (and that when they are *beſt at eaſe*,) and all thoſe things wherein they do moſt boaſt, and *bleſſe themſelues*, as their manner is to do. And which of theſe *two* to take, is moſt eaſily, and quickly determined, by any man who is not feared out of his wits. The *firſt* aduantage followeth.

3. Aduantage. 3. *That the very* worſt *that euer befell any child of God in this world, was ſent of purpoſe to prevent the* worſt of all, (*viz*: perdition *in the world to come*) *but the* beſt *that euer wicked man had, was but to helpe him the neerer to hell.*

The Scripture is plaine and plentifull for either part, we will take a taſt of both. The *Apoſtle* writing to the *Corinthians* (& in them to all true *Chriſtians*) doth aſſure vs that what correction or chaſtiſement, we endure here, is to ſaue vs from confuſion for ever, [*we are* (ſayth he)
1 Cor. 11. 32. *chaſtened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world*, the Lord doth, as *good parents*, doe to *bad children*, beſtow many a whipping vpon vs, to ſaue vs from hanging; his ſharpeſt *rod*, is but to prevent a ſharper *ſword*, is it not better to *ſmart* then to *bleede*? or to *bleed a little* by the gracious hand of a good father, then to *bleede to death* by the ſevere hand of a rigorous executioner?

Pſal. 118. 17. Surely there was ſomewhat in it, that *David* tels vs it was ſo [*good for him that he had beene afflicted*,] which intimates he had beene in an ill caſe, if it had not beene ſo: And what may be that [*ſweete fruit that comes to ſuch as*
Heb 11.8. *haue beene* (not once, (*or ſo*) ſmitten, but) *exerciſed often vnder affliction*?] if it be not this we ſpeake of? Or what colour

colour of reaſon can be rendred, why we ſhould not one-
ly *reioyce*, but even *glory* in tribulation, if it were not a ſan- Rom.
ctified and aſſured means to eſcape deſtruction? [*Thy Rod
and thy Staffe* (ſaith good *Dauid*) *they comfort me.*] Why?
how ſo? it were a ſenceleſſe ſpeech and vntrue, if he had
not told vs before, that the Lord was his Shepheard, and
dealt with him as carefull Shepheards doe, vſe the *rod*, &
ſtaffe, to ſaue them from the *beare*, and *wolfe*, and there vp-
on he tels vs, that no danger can affright him, becauſe the
Lord (*by correction*) delivers him, from the ruine where-
into els he would run: Better the Shepheard *ſmite*, then
the wolfe *bite*; they are *good ſtroakes* that keepe vs from
the *pawes* and *iawes* of the devourer. And this was ſmelt
of one of *Iobs* friends long before theſe dayes, who tels
him, (and God tels vs in him) that when the Lord mea-
neth to [*ſaue a mans ſoule from the pit, &c. he chaſteneth* Iob
him with paine, &c:] ſcourging him *ſeverely*, that he may 19.
ſaue him *graciouſly*: And wherin, but in this alone, could
his *loue vnto vs*, and his *chaſtiſement of vs*, goe together?

But on the vngodly mans part, you haue heard before,
that his beſt eſtate helpes him to hell, nothing doth
more further his eternall miſery, then the things he ac-
counts his greateſt mercy: What ſaid the Lord to *Iſaiah*: Iſa. 6. 9.
[*Make the heart of this people fat, their eares heavie, &c.*] Let
them remaine inſenſible of any inſtruction, incapable of
any humiliation; ſtirre them not, never trouble them, but
giue them their owne way and will, that they may be at
hearts eaſe; but to what end is all this granted? why, that
their endleſſe miſery may be haſtened, to prevent their
ſalvation, which they *refuſed*, to procure their *damnation*
which they *deſerved*. And the ſame ſayd *Chriſt* (out of
this *Prophet*) to thoſe of his time, who reſting in the
ſame condition, were reſerved to the *ſame deſtruction*.

Doe we not reade of ſome that were free from all miſeries, and had a kinde of exemption from all afflictions,
Iob. 21.11. 12. 13. all their dayes, and paſſed their time as merrily, as ever men did, (in ryot and revelling) and the next newes we heare of them, is their everlaſting overthrow for ever
Luk. 16. 25. and ever? What was it which was ſayd to *Dives* being in hell-torments, even this, [*Thou in thy life time hadſt thy pleaſure, &c: but now thou art tormented.*] As if he ſhould ſay, thy pleaſure, eaſe, delicacy, &c. were the things that
Note. haſtened this perdition wherein thou art. And you muſt imagine this one to be the *embleme*, or perſon *repreſentatiue* of all that *Great ones* that ever came or ſhall come into hell: nothing is a ſurer *Harbinger* of eternall damnation to an vngodly man, then his freedome from temporall affliction.

Iſa. 5. 14. Did you not heare before, that [*Therefore hell had enlarged her ſelfe and opened her mouth, &c.*] Becauſe it ſeemed moſt greedy to devoure the fatteſt, and greateſt, of thoſe that were never taken downe, nor abated, by any earthly calamitie, as if ſuch men were the ſweeteſt morſels, hell could haue?

And doe you not reade againe on the contrary; that,
Rev. 7. 14. 15. [*Therefore the Saints of God are in his glorious preſence day and night for ever, and ever, and haue all teares wiped from their eyes,*] becauſe *they came out of great tribulation* and perſecution, and had beene ſo miſerably handled here in this world, that being ſo *thynne*, and *leane*, ſo *poore*, and *bare*, for *Chriſt*, they might the better (even for that cauſe) come to be partakers of this celeſtiall bleſſednes with *Chriſt*.

And this is the *fift* difference, and the Saints *fift* advantage, and it is no *meane*, but a *mightie* oddes that wee haue of them herein: Our *temporall* miſery preventeth

our

our *eternall*; their *temporary* happines doth haſten their *everlaſting* miſery. What man *in his right minde*, would not ſoone ſay, which of the two he would take, whether the *worſt* of this world, with aſſurance of *no evill* in that which is to come; or that which may be *beſt* here, with certaintie of the *worſt* that hell can yeeld him afterward. Alwayes we ſee, a childe of *God* at his *worſt*, hath his *beſt* eſtate behind, and a wicked mans worſt is to come, when he hath had the beſt this world could affoord him. This earth is *our hell*, (even all the hell we ſhall haue;) *heaven* ſhall ſurely follow it. It is *their heaven*, (even all the heaven they can haue) and *hell* muſt be, ſhall ſurely enſue, and ſucceede it. And this is our *fift* advantage. The *fixt* and *laſt* followeth, and that is this.

6. *That a childe of* God *at his* worſt, *even in all his evill whatſoever, is evermore in actuall poſſeſsion of all his* excellencies: *but a wicked man, hath nothing but* ignominy *and* baſenes, *at his* beſt, *even in all his honors.* 6 Advantage.

Take a childe of God, and conceit him to be cloathed with all the calamitie and contempt, you can imagine; ſuppoſe him vnder all the reproach and miſery, that is poſſible to be put vpon him, yet now in GODS account he is,

A childe of God,
An heire of heaven,
A coe-heire with Chriſt,
A King, and more then a Conquerour.

And indeede more then can be vttered by vs, or conceived by himſelfe, according to that of the Apoſtle: [*we are now the ſonnes of God, but it doth not appeare what we ſhall be.*] As if he ſhould ſay, we know we haue a ſtate to come, whoſe excellency cannot be knowne here; all the world cannot deviſe *a name* good enough to declare 1 Ioh. 3. 2.

it; the vtmoſt here is to be called *the ſonnes of God*; but what we ſhall be, is ſuch a ſtate as can be called by *no name* on earth, we haue [*a life which is hid with Chriſt in God*] and till he be reuealed from heauen, at his ſecond comming, the glory of this our condition cannot be diſcouered. 3. 3.

But on the other ſide, how baſe and worthleſſe, contemptible and contumelious, is euery vngodly man, in the middeſt of all his glory and renowne, and all the applauſe the world puts vpon him? he that takes notice by what tearmes the *Holy Ghoſt* doth enſtile them, cannot but ſay, we ſay the truth, at leaſt in part; for their *full infamy* being *infinite*, that is alſo reſerued, till the *infinite honour* of the elect ſhall be manifeſted. In the meane time are they not called,

Children of hell,
Slaues of Satan,
Vile perſons,
Dogs, *ſwine*, *vipers*, yea *Diuels*.

With many other more, of the like *loathſome* kinde, *inſpired* by the Lord, *pennea* by his ſecretaries, *recorded* in his ſcriptures, *preached* by his meſſengers, and remaining for ever, as the righteous brands, and moſt proper appellations, that *God* himſelfe hath put vpon them, & which they muſt beare from him, who is *too great*, and *too good*, to vnſay, one *iot*, or *tittle*, of that he hath ſpoken.

To inſtance particular perſons were to little purpoſe, all that are mentioned by name, or comprehended, and meant, in that peerles Catalogue which we haue in this Chapter, though they were expoſed to the worſt and vtmoſt contempts that could be, for *infamy*, and to the moſt tyrannous and villanous torments that could be for *extreamitie*; yet the *worſt word* wee heare of them is this:

[*All*

[*All these dyed in the faith, and obtained a good report.*] And Vers. 13.
againe [*Of whom the world was not worthy*] loe, a *world* 39.
[nay more then a *world*) of honour, in two or three Vers. 38.
words, for the *whole world*, (to wit, of *worldly* and *vngodly persons*,) is not valued at the *worth* of one childe of *God*, no not by *God* himselfe, *who* hath bought them at a *high price*, yet gaue no more for them, then he thought them *worth*, and hath made knowne their worth to the world, by the *price* he bestowed on them, *viz.* the *most precious bloud* of his *only* Sonne, which it pleased him not to thinke *too good*, to be given for the purchase of their redemption, and glory. So that they are not *over valued*, at this *invaluable* rate, seeing the most wise *God* out of his owne wisedome, and loue, hath set thus much vpon them, and in not accounting the world worthy of them, hath also pleased (through the merits of the Lord that bought them) to accoũt them *worthy of the world to come*, Rev.
and of all that *glory*, *immortalitie*, *life*, and *blessednes* there, which all the wit, reason, and vtmost reach, of mortall man, is not so much as able once to guesse at; for it being so absolutely infinite, it doth infinitely surpasse all possibilitie of man to ayme at it, much lesse comprehend.

On the contrary now, where shall the vngodly and the sinner appeare? or what shall be accounted of them, if the Lord come to giue sentence vpon them at the *very best* of their estate? What are they worth? how are they esteemed before him? why *nothing*, *vanitie*, yea, *lesse then* Psal.
nothing, *lighter then vanitie*; more vile then the basest ver- Isa 40.
mine they tread vpõ, yea more vile then the earth which harboureth both them and all *base-ve mine* whatsoever; no creature so bad as they vpon the whole earth, onely the *Diuell* in hell, he is somewhat worse, & by *how much* he is worse then they, (because he made them naught,)

by

by *so much* are they worse then all other creatures, who were by them, and for their sakes, *accursed*.

To bee entituled *dogs*, *swyne*, *vipers* and such like, is onely to shew their baseness, as these creatures seeme to vs, not as they are in themselues; for so saith *Iob*, [*they are not to be compared to the dogs of my flocke*;] for these creatures, God made them *exceeding good*, onely sin (*their sin*) hath made them so *naught*, as wee vsually account them to be, in themselues they haue no sinne, nor ought els that is bad, but onely by them, by whose sins they are corrupted, and degenerate from that *noble excellency*, and those *notable qualities* of their nature, which once they had, when they had an estate as pure in nature, as wee our selues in our created condition. Now therefore as the *Diuell* onely is worst of all, because he made wicked men so bad, so they (next him) are the worst in the world, because all other things are imbased by them.

Iob

Besides, take the *mightiest* among the men of the world, haue not their names perished with them? and are become as rotten as their bodyes? yea worse? because whereas the *carkase* is consumed in the earth and anoyes none, their name liues like *carryon* aboue ground vnburyed, & stinks more, and more strongly from one age to another, and shall liue to rott through all generations to come for euer, till they shall be againe raysed out of rottennes, to liue and meete their liuing *loathsome* names before the Lords iudgements seate, who shall then, and there, put an end to both, by throwing both, into the bottomlesse pit of endles perdition, they being the men that must rise (to fall) to everlasting shame and contempt.

To particulate *Cayne*, *Saul*, *Ahitophell*, *Ahab*, *Iudas*, or the rest of that *beaad-role* of branded persons whom the liuing and most glorious *God*, hath marked for remarke-

able

able infamy, were not to much purpoſe, and wee haue had occaſion to note them before: it ſufficeth to know, that their glory is with ſhame, and that all the *reputation* they haue had with men at the *greateſt*, hath but made their *reproach greater* with God. Men haue heaped honourable titles of greatnes vpon them to dignifie and renowne them, which haue beene but the poore *vapours* of their *ayery words*, breathed out either for *feare* or for *flattery*, and haue vaniſhed in the very vtterance; & *God* hath laden them with heavy, and moſt ignominious appellations; which his mouth having *ſpoken*, and his pen having *written*, muſt remayne to cleaue for ever, vnto that *moſt* vnworthy, and *miſerable memoriall* which the world hath of them, who knowes them by no names, or titles, but onely by thoſe that are worſe then *none at all*.

And touching both (in this laſt difference) it may be well and ſafely obſerved, that the *worſe words* the world hath given Gods Saints, the *better* and *more glorious titles* are given them of *God* himſelfe: and the more men haue renowned the other, the more hath the Lord abhorred them, and made them abhominable, to all eyes & eares.

His owne *Sonne* (our Saviour) when in the dayes of his fleſh he dwelt among vs, had as bad, yea, and farre worſe language given him, then any that ever lived; he that reades his life, knowes how oft he was abuſed, and moſt baſely vilyfied, he *was a Samaritane*, he *was mad*, he *had a divell*, &c: but the *Lord God* (his father, and our father,) hath *given him a name aboue all names*, and honor and glory aboue all principalities and powers; and ſo much the more glorioufly exalted him, by how much among men he was become the ſcorne, and contempt of the people. And in like maner doth he deale with *Chri-*

John 20. 17. Phil. 2. 9.

ſtians (as he did with *Chriſt*) according to the eminency of their pietie (for which, *the greater it is*, they ſuffer greater reproach,) he giues them more excellent glory, even in the eyes of men, as we might ſhew in many examples. And this is our *ſixt* and laſt *Aduantage*.

And now (beloued and longed for in the Lord) what ſhall we ſay to theſe things? here we haue had a *ſhort*, and *ſummary* ſurvey of thoſe ſingular, and celeſtiall aduantages, that the Lords people haue, (euen at their *worſt*) of all vngodly men at their *beſt*. I ſay a *ſhort* and *ſummary* ſurvey of them, for if we ſhould enlarge our ſelues in the diſcouery of them ſo farre as we might, *when* ſhould we haue done? or *where* ſhould we end? or, if we could manifeſt them as they are, (*which mortalitie cannot doe*) there could be neither *end*, nor *meaſure*, of our Diſcourſe; nay, it might be truely ſayd of theſe excellent things, as the *Euangeliſt* ſpeaketh of the reſt of the acts, and ſayings of
Ioh. 21. 25. Chriſt, which are written, that [*the whole world would not containe the bookes, &c.*] that muſt containe, the full declaration of thoſe infinite things, wherein the true comfort of the Saints doth conſiſt; for they are (in truth) *vnvtterable*, nay indeed, *vnſearchable*, as the *Apoſtle* doth plainely ſignifie when he ſayth [*he heard* (*being wrapt into the third heauen*) *things not to be vttered.*] And if of the myſteries and ſecrets of the Goſpell (which els-where he ſpeaketh of,) much more may it be moſt truely ſayd of the conſolation, benefit, and reward of the *faithfull* and
1 Cor. 2. 9. *perſecuted* profeſſors of the ſame, that they are ſuch [*As eye hath not ſeene, eare hath not heard, nor haue entred into the heart of man to apprehend,*] the *naturall* man is meant in the former, the *ſpirituall*, may be vnderſtood in the latter. For *grace* is as vnable (mixt with infirmitie) to comprehend *heauenly* things that are *glorious*, as *nature* (voyde of

grace)

grace) is, to conceiue aright, and reach thoſe that be *holy* and *gracious*. Why then, what ſhall we ſay to theſe heavenly things, thus *heaped* vp together, to make vs wholy happy? If the Lord haue laid them vp in *his booke*, ſhould not we lay them vp in *our boſomes?* And bleſſe him abundantly who hath ſo over-abūdantly bleſſed vs with theſe benedictions, which are ſent vs, ſo to ſweeten the bittereſt cup of our calamitie, that we might drinke the bottome of it with all chearfulneſſe and reioycing? what ſayd the good Prophet of God once, in a caſe of this kinde, [*Reioyce O heaven, and be ioyfull O earth, breake forth into prayſes O yee mountaines, for the Lord hath comforted his people, and ſhewed mercy vpon his afflicted*] and even this, may and ought all Gods people now to ſpeake (concerning the premiſſes) in the particulars that we haue revealed.

How came the *good Chriſtians* of the primitiue times, when perſecution was ſo ſore and extreame, not onely (as was noted before) [to reioyce, but even to glory in tribulation?] [*to ſuffer with ioy* (yea with much ioy) *the ſpoyling of their goods?*] To goe from the Conſiſtory with bloudie ſhoulders, yet [*glad hearts, reioycing that they were accounted worthy to vndergoe the worſt for Chriſt?*] And the Apoſtle who was ſo abundant, aboue all the reſt, (not onely in the *labours*, but in the *ſufferings* of the Goſpell, alſo) telleth vs plainly [*Great is my reioycing, I am full of comfort, I haue* (not onely abundantly ioy, but) *ioy over-abundant* in *all my tribulations.*] Theſe are ſtrange words, yet true, and ſuch as he ſaith, he hath alreadie in poſſeſſion, and not onely in ſome *lighter* afflictions, but in his *heavieſt* diſtreſſes, even in *all* his tribulati-

Rom. 5. 3. Heb. 10. 34. Act. 5. 40. 41.

2 Cor. 7. 4.

ons;

To haue Great ioy,

To be full of comfort, *yea*
To be over-full, *or to* over-abound,

is ſuch a ſtrayne of ſpeech, as never fell from man, by any *ſence* or *reaſon* of fleſh and bloud, but onely from the *ſpirit* of *God*, and the *power* of his grace, which had perſwaded his ſoule of the *ſweetneſſe* of this ſaving truth that we teach; that a man at his *worſt* ſhould not onely be *full*, but *over-flow* with comfort and ioy, which is more then any wicked man can ſay of his *beſt*, for all the happineſſe vnder heaven cannot *fill*, much leſſe *over-fill* the heart of man, he cannot be ſatisfied, much leſſe can he be *glutted indeede*, or *ſurfet in truth*, with all temporall delights, he that had the largeſt ſhare in them of any *mortall man* that ever lived, (even *Salomon*) tels vs they cannot giue full contentment, and againe [*the eye cannot be ſatiſfied with ſeeing, nor the eare with hearing, &c*] but here, at our *very worſt*, we haue our meaſure of ioy and ſolace, preſſed downe to the *bottome*, filled vp to the *brim*, and running over vpon vs, from the Lord, who telleth vs, that theſe light and ſhort troubles, (doe not onely thus conſiſt with our great reioycing here preſent, but) they [*procure vnto vs in heauen, an exceeding exceſſiue* (for ſo the words doe ſound in their true ſence) *eternall waight of glory:*] Loe, what words the *Holy Ghoſt* vſeth to expreſſe theſe things to vs, [*exceeding,*] [*exceſſiue,*] to giue vs to know, that theſe being the *greateſt words* which can ſhew any thing to vs, the things intended in them, are *greater* then *all words* can expreſſe.

Eccleſ. 5. 10.

2 Cor. 4. 17.

And why then doe we *droope*, or *faint* vnder any thing (dearely beloved?) how ill doth ſorrow or feare (of this ſort) become a *Saint?* who is not onely commanded to [*reioyce in the Lord, euermore,*] but hath reaſon given him ſo to doe, in the things (thus farre) declared by vs.

1 Theſ. 5. 16.

Phil. 4. 13.

Queſti-

Queſtionleſſe, if we could ſettle our thoughts vpon theſe divine things, they would produce very divine effects in our hearts, and put vs (as it were) into heaven beforehand, (*in part*,) and make vs much the more meete, for the abſolute poſſeſſion of the perfections thereof in due time.

And this is the *firſt vſe* of this moſt worthy point of truth, wherein though we haue ſeemed long to inſiſt; yet know, it is ſuch good being here, (as *Peter* once ſayd) that wee could even build Tabernacles in the bleſſed comfort of the ſame, as finding it to be much harder to *get out*, then *to goe on* further in the diſcovery hereof, wherein a faithfull man is (after a ſort) *tranſfigured*, and mounted aloft farre beyond all *mortalitie*, *miſery*, & *vexation*, of men, or divels in this world; which now, (thus rayſed) either he ſeeth not, or if he do, he beholdeth them as faire vnder his *feete*, with a Chriſtian, and holy contempt, and himſelfe hath (his heart being ſetled on theſe things) his ſeate *on high* with the Lord, and his bleſſed and beloved ones, vnto whom he ſeemeth to be tranſlated, in the ſweete apprehenſions of his ſoule, while he is converſant in theſe ſacred, and ſupernaturall meditations; and beholdeth the *glorious face* of God, ſhining vpon him, and his owne heart ſo dazeled with the *heavenly luſtre* of this moſt bleſſed light, that he cannot well tell (for the time) where he is, whether *in the body or no*, his ſoule ſoaring aloft, and finding ſuch inconceivable contentment in theſe conſolations.

But we muſt put an end to our diſcourſe of theſe comforts, and leaue the reſt, to that time when we ſhall come into *actuall* and full poſſeſſion of *endleſſe life*, where wee ſhall enioy the infinite fulneſſe of thoſe things, whereof, all that can be ſayd of the *beſt* things that are *here*, are,

but the *beginnings*, and firſt fruits, of that which we ſhall haue *there*.

2 *Vſe.* And ſo we come to *a ſecond vſe* of this bleſſed truth which concerneth wicked men, vnto whom wee muſt change our note, and *ſing another tune*, from the true conſequence of the ſame; for it ſoundeth (as all heavenly truth doth) *heavily*, in their eares, and was not more *ſweetely muſicall* to the Saints, then it is *dolefully miſerable*, to ſinners. We neede not ſay much to them, the loſſe of all the aforeſayd happines and felicity of the faithfull, is more then a little, inaſmuch as we haue ſeene, (as wee haue gone all *a long* from one paſſage to another,) their miſery and vnhappines, hath ſtill beene entwiſted (*oppoſitely*) to the ioy of Gods choſen, and entayled thereunto; ſo that they are not onely *deprived* of ſo much ioy, as hath appeared to the faithful in every particular, from point to point; but are further *aſſured* of as many, and as great miſcheifs, as our mercies doe amount vnto; every *comfort* to vs, carrying with it *a curſe* alſo vnto them.

Terror to Perſecutors

Yet over and aboue all that wee haue ſayd, there is ſomewhat more falling vpon them, (to their further terror) from this truth; and that is meant vnto the perſecutors and tormentors of Gods people, who doe full often affright, and terrifie, thoſe whom they haue in their power, with big, and bitter words, with cruell, and curſed ſpeakings; viz: that *this*, and *that* they will doe, & they ſhall, (I, that they ſhall) well know, that it is in their power to exerciſe their pleaſure, and to haue their will vpon them: Iuſt, as inſolent and imperious as *Pilate*, [*knowest thou not that I haue power to binde thee, &c*, and theſe tyrants will impryſon, will torture, will kill, what will they not *doe*? and what ſhall not Gods childe *endure*, if either *vile words*, or *villanous deedes*, may put them into dread,

dread, diſtraction, yea, deſperation?

But wilt thou know, O thou vaine man], and vile miſcreant, how idlely all this is vttered to terrifie him, who can by vertue of the glorious light of this gracious truth, *triumphantly* retort all this vpon thy ſelfe, to thine owne terror and amazement of heart, and tell thee to thy teeth, that ſeeing the *worſt* of Gods childe is better then the *beſt*, of any wicked man, therefore all thou canſt ſay, or doe, cannot make him halfe ſo miſerable as thy ſelfe art, who doeſt thus menace the members of *Ieſus Chriſt*. When thou haſt *ſpett out* all thy malice, *ſpued vp* all the venyme, *ſpent*, and emptyed vpon them, all the malignity and gall the Divell ever engendered, and encreaſed in thee; yet even then, thou haſt not made him halfe ſo *vnhappy*, as thou now art in thy *conceited happines*, and exemption, from all theſe extreamityes. James 2.20

And the poore diſtreſſed *Martyr* of the *Lord Ieſus*, may ſay in the tryumph, of a true and powerfull faith, *O Tyrant*, or *Oppreſſor, know, that now in this agony, in theſe anguiſhes, I will not change ſtates with* thee, *my caſe is better then thine, all thou canſt doe, cannot make me ſo bad as thy ſelf, my tortures are to bee preferred to thy pleaſures, my racks, chaynes, ſcourges, &c. cannot make me ſo miſerable, as thy palace, proſperity, eaſe, honour, and power makes thee: I am more ioyous vnder all theſe great grievances, then thou canſt bee in all thy greateſt glories: doe thou perſecute I will ioy, doe thou afflict I will pray*; ſmite *thou, I will* ſmile; *my God hath laid a ſweete, a ſoveraigne, a healing*, yea *a heavenly plaiſter, to all theſe bitter ſores, which fully* cures *them, and* comforts *me. namely, that he hath taught me to learne, that which now, I have learned to feele, that my worſt eſtate, is better then thy beſt, the ſweetnes of which leſſon, makes all evills eaſie to ſwallow, and of quicke, and comfortable digeſtion, even at the extreameſt,*

treameſt, that they can be. And herein I ioy, and will ioy, maugre all the divells in hell, and hell-hounds on earth.

Would not this, (or the like ſpeach vnto this) make the eares of Tyrants to *tingle*, and their hearts to *tremble*? would it not vexe and torture their very ſpirits within them, to heare theſe voyces ſounding from the mouths of thoſe, who are vnder their heavy vexations?

Certainely, it would worke one way or other with them, if they could but beleeue it; either it would cauſe repentance vnto ſalvation, and make them weary of their wickednes, & moſt willing to become as one of *them* whom they thus abuſe; or to fret and fume, and gnaw out their owne bowels, to ſee themſelues defeated in all the impious purpoſes, which being to make the Lords people moſt miſerable of all men, can not by the *moſt*, and *worſt*, and *all*, they can doe, make them any way ſo miſerable as themſelues, who (*in their owne opinion*) are more happy then any. Doe you thinke it would not make their hearts to *boyle*, yea to *burne* within them, and *chafe* them ſo throughly, that they ſhould bee forced to *foame* at mouth, with indignation, and diſtemper? Were a man but in their boſomes, to ſee how they fret, and vexe *inwardly*, when they perceiue, *God himſelfe* to laugh them to ſcorne in heaven, and *his people* to laugh at them on earth, to ſee, that all the mallice and villany the Divell can arme them withall, cannot make anothers eſtate *at worſt*, ſo bad then their owne, *at beſt*; then would ſomething appeare, as the effect and efficacy of this truth, which wee haue told them, it may be they would ceaſe their bloody hands againſt the bleſſed of the Lord, and begin to lay them on themſelues, as *Iudas*, (and ſome other of their *predeceſſors*,) haue done. But our *God*, the *God of heaven*, doth ſuffer the *Divel*, the [*God of this world*

is

to blind-fold their eyes that they ſhould not ſee,] or know, or acknowledge this truth, and ſo by the ignorance thereof, they worke out, at once

Their owne perdition, and
Our ſalvation, and make
Vs, bleſſed Martyrs,
Themſelues, accurſed Malefactors,

Phil. 1. 28.

in deſpight of all that they (*contrarily*) intend; and hereof, if they might, or could be perſwaded, no queſtion were to be made, but they would quickly become, either *better*, or *worſe*. But it is miſery enough that they cannot be brought to beleeue the ſame; oh, what ſaith the Apoſtle [*If our Goſpell be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt* :] A heavie ſentence, inaſmuch as by ignorance (eſpecially *wilfull* of any truth, *more ſinne* is multiplied againſt *God*, *more ſervice*, is done to the *Divell*, more miſchiefe to *men*, and (conſequently) more plagues heaped on, and wrath ſtored vp againſt the day of wrath, to be powred by the mightie arme of *Almightie God*, vpon the heads of all thoſe, that haue thus encreaſed their impieties before him, who ſhall not eſcape the full poyſon of all thoſe his *envenomed vialls* which he hath revealed from heaven, to be reſerved in hell for them.

2 Cor. 4. 3.

Rom. 2.

But we will now *leaue* theſe men, as men *left of God*, and not ſo happie as once to giue *vs the hearing*, or the *Lord, the beleeuing* of this truth; but given over to be *drunke* with their owne *deluſions*, to their owne damnation, perſwading themſelues ſo well of their owne evill eſtate, and being ſo ill perſwaded of the good, and bleſſed condition of Gods children, that they meane to continue as they are, and to proceede in their impietie againſt the Lord, & oppreſſion againſt his people, till they haue wrought out, their owne eternall confuſion by *both*, and

prouoked the dreadfull indignation of the *Lord God*, to come vpon them to the vttermoſt, through this *double iniquitie*, committed againſt his higheſt Maieſtie.

3. *Vſe.* Inſtruction to all men.

And in our *laſt vſe* we will turne our ſpeech to all manner of perſons, endeuouring to doe our beſt, to giue them that true information, which floweth from this Point whereof we now treat, and the premiſſes of the ſame, which haue beene ſo particularly and plentifully related, at large vnto vs.

And the conſequence of this truth for matter of inſtruction, looketh *both* at the Saints of God *themſelues*, *and alſo* at all *others*, that are not yet reuealed to be ſuch.

For the *former*, viz: thoſe who haue beene already found and approoued to be faithfull, whoſe happy intereſt is therefore vndeniable in this heauenly truth, it cals for their conſtant, continuall, and perpetuall *perſeuerance*, in that their eſtate of grace and holineſſe, the *worſt* whereof, is ſo good, as we haue heard. For if our firſt being in grace (while we are yet but *babes*, or *beginners* therin) do giue vs aſſurance of ſo much conſolation, doubtles, if wee continue and hold out to the end, as we grow, and goe on, in grace, ſo doth the ſweete ſauour of this happineſſe encreaſe and multiply vpon vs. But I hope the diſcouery of the comforts aforeſayd, is ſuch, as may ſaue me the labour, of any further preſſing of this point vpon them, and that their ſtate of the bleſſednеſſe of them is ſo pleaſant, as they haue *ſenſible Arguments* within them ſufficient, both to perſwade them to tarry where they are; and to oppoſe, and repulſe all ſuggeſtions to the contrary. And therefore I will not perſue them with more words, for whoſe ſakes eſpecially, all that is paſt, hath beene vttered, and whoſe ſetled reſolutions touching their ſtate of grace, are ſuch, and

ſo

ſo vnmoveable as was the *Apoſtles*, who ſayd, [*I am ſure, that neither death, nor life, nor Angells, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the loue of God, which is in* Ieſus Chriſt our Lord.] This was his, of *himſelfe*, and the *Romanes*; this is, and ought to be ours, of *our ſelues*, and of all *true Chriſtians*; and therein we will reſt, and turne our *laſt ſpeech*, vnto thoſe that yet are *not turned* to the Lord, by any viſible manifeſtation of that faith, the vertue wherof, doth giue them their part, and portion in the ſaving peace, & comfort of that which hath beene vttered. Rom. 8. 38. 39.

And what can we vrge (*either more, or leſſe*) vpon them, then that they ſhould now (*at laſt*) learne to leaue their former ſinfull, and vngodly condition, and cleaue to the Lord, in the power and truth of ſinceritie, and ſanctification; that in as much as they are not yet *Canonized* of the Lord for Saints, nor haue their *names written in the booke of life*, (ſo farre as their life ſheweth vnto men) they might now (*once*) bethinke themſelues what they are, and come out of that eſtate, wherein they cannot be happie.

And what more *weightie*, or *worthy* argument can we vſe, then this which is ſo powerfull to perſwade, if it be duely pondered of them: For it is drawne from that which nature affecteth, and deſireth (*in all men*) aboue *all things*, to wit, the having of a *good*, yea the *beſt* eſtate, and condition that is to be had in this world, & a much more better, in heaven, then can be had vpon any termes here. And can there be a better eſtate, then that? or any ſo good as that? which

Is impoſſible to be had, at the worſt, and
The worſt whereof, is better then the beſt of any other.

Beholde, out of this eſtate *all proſperitie is miſery*, and in it, *all miſery is proſperitie*: haue we not made it more then manifeſt, by ſuch abundance of moſt *infallible*, *diuine*, and *vndoubted* evidence, as neither *diuels*, nor men, can colourably gainſay? And is not ſuch a ſtate worth ſeeking among thoſe to whom it is *ſolely*, and *wholly*, appropriated of the Lord? Who would not be *a Saint* vpon ſuch tearmes, and embrace pietie, becauſe of the precious and peerleſſe *bleſſedneſſe*, it brings with it, vpon a mans *vniuerſall* ſtate here, and that which is *eternall* in Heaven? Why, let men learne to reaſon and diſpute thus.

If there be a ſort of people, who are in ſuch a ſtate as hath beene ſayd, the *worſt* whereof is ſimply good, and incomparably *better* then the *beſt* eſtate of any other whatſoever; what doe I, what am I, out of that ſocietie? I ſee my ſelfe miſerable (as I am) at *my beſt*, I will ſurely out of my ſelfe, and ſtriue with all my ſtrength to be one of thoſe men, among whom the *meaneſt* fare ſo well, when they are in the *worſt eſtate* that can be.

And if (thus) *God* make vs able to beginne to argue (for his glory) againſt our ſelues, when theſe firſt propoſitions be well vnderſtood, and applyed of vs, we ſhall be able (by his grace) to frame more comfortable premiſſes, and to goe forward in this *diuine diſputation*, with conſideration of thoſe further things, the concluſion and inference whereof, will miniſter vnto vs yet *more courage*, to cleaue vnto the Lord in the communion of his Saints.

For why? the *former argument* was taken from the *miſeries*, *grieuances*, *perſecutions*, and *oppreſſions* of Gods people, and yet it is powerfull, and able to conclude, both a *neceſsitie*, (and includeth alſo an *excellency*) of our ſepa-

ſeparation from ſinners, to become of that number who are ſo happie, in their very *miſery*: but *this latter* may be taken from the *graces* of the ſame men, from whoſe diſtreſſes alone, we reaſoned before; and for the *further wooing*, and *faſter glewing* of vs vnto the heavenly corporation, of ſuch as are happily incorporated into *Chriſt Ieſus*, it may (in the ſecond place) be framed thus.

If the *worſt* of Gods people, *viz:* their troubles, miſeries, and oppreſſions, be ſuch as doe exceede all the well-being of other men, if in their *grievances* and vexations, it goe ſo well with them, how happie muſt theſe men be conſidered in their *graces*, and the employment of them? if their bitter ſorrowes be ſo *ſweete*, how will the *ſweete ſip*, and ſavour of Gods ſpirit taſte, and reliſh in them? if out of crueltie, tyranny, and all manner of evill ſo much good may iſſue, when they haue to doe with wicked and vnreaſonable men, who can conceiue the conſolation that ſhall accrew vnto them, in the free and peaceable exerciſe of their graces, wherein they deale onely with Gods owne Maieſtie, and ſuch of their fellow brethren and ſiſters, as are truely gracious with themſelues? If the troubled waters, which are ſo muddyed with the foule fruit of *Satans*, and mens malice, may yeelde ſuch joy, what will flow from the bleſſed influence of God himſelfe thinke yee, when he ſhall leade them to thoſe Welles of ſalvation, whence they ſhall *draw freely*, and *drinke their fill*, of thoſe pure chriſtall ſtreames, which himſelfe hath diſtilled? Surely every man muſt needes (in all reaſon) thinke, that if their *worſt eſtate* of griefe and miſery be *ſo good*, this of grace and peace, cannot but be *better*, and yeeld ſweeter fruit then the former; & ſo the *beſt eſtate* of a wicked man

being ſo farre behinde their *worſt*, muſt needes be much more behind this, and vtterly incomparable there-vnto.

And yet, though this be *much*, the *moſt*, and *beſt* of all, is yet to come, viz: their ſtate of *glory*, which ſhall be the reward both of their *grieuances*, and *graces* alſo; and from that, a man whoſe heart were ſet aright, might *laſtly* reaſon thus.

Theſe men (*Gods Saints*) were happier then I, at the *worſt* of their miſeries, even in the midſt of their enemies; They were yet more happy then ſo, when with their *God*, and with each other among themſelues, they might peaceably vſe their *graces*; the leaſt of theſe two, was more then a little beyond my beſt: But their *beſt* of all, being yet to come, *to wit*, their bleſſednes and glory in heaven, with the *God* of heaven; what ſhall I conceiue of their inconceiuable felicitie, then and there? and how infinitely vnhappy am *I*, that am ſo ſhort of the *good* they haue, in their *very euill*? and am not yet ſo farre, as to be equall with them in their meaneſt, and moſt afflicted condition? Surely it being ſo well with them in their *grieuances*; it cannot but be much better with them in their *graces*, and *beſt of all*, in their *glory*. O the hydden (*yet heauenly*) eſtate of theſe holy ones; which is ſo heauenly, that it muſt be *hidden*, there being no poſſibility on earth to reueale it. *Who* would be out of that ſtate, wherein is ſo much excellency, that every *euill* therein, is exceeding *good*, and every *good* exceedeth each other? If a mans heart be not *chained* to the *Diuell*, and by the *Diuell*, to the *world*, to be kept here, in that perpetuall *pryſon* of infidelity, and profanes, which will bring him to that *perdition* which is due there vnto; hee cannot but be drawne out of himſelfe, and his ſinfull ſtate, with this *three-fold cord*, and be tyed faſt for ever (as one enamoured

red and enflamed) to the *Lord God*, in the fellowſhip of thoſe *his Saints*, who having beene faithfull before him heere, (both in *doing* his will, and *ſuffering* for the ſame) haue now receiued the wages, both of their *faith*, and *ſufferings*, in the Kingdome for which they ſuffered, where-in they ſhall ſee *him as he is*, and with *him*, his bleſſed *Sonne*, his eternall *Spirit*, his beloued *Saints*, in that life and immortality, bliſſe, and felicitie, which *God* who is faithfull, hath *performed to them*, *promiſed to vs*, and to all the reſt of his holy ones, keeping them, who are *already* in actuall poſſeſſion, not abſolutely perfect (*as being yet without vs*) till *we* ſhall be brought vnto *them*, and both *they*, and *we*, (and all the elect) vnto the Lord our God, at the laſt day, to be compleate in that entyre, and eternall perfection of glory, the *hope* whereof, giues vs hart, and makes vs wayte, and ſigh in our ſoules, looking and longing for that glorious appearance of his, which ſhall make vs to appeare in glory with him, for ever and ever.

1 Iohn 3. 2.

Heb. 11. 40.

AMEN.